

A Resource Guide for Massachusetts' Grandparents Raising Their Grandchildren

**Third Edition
2001**



**Jane Swift
Governor**

Lillian Glickman, Secretary, Executive Office Of Elder Affairs
William D. O'Leary, Secretary, Executive Office of Health and Human Services

A Resource Guide for Massachusetts' Grandparents Raising their Grandchildren

*Third Edition
2001*

Collaborating Agencies

MASSACHUSETTS EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF ELDER AFFAIRS

Lillian Glickman, Secretary

and

MASSACHUSETTS EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

William D. O'Leary, Secretary

*Many people contributed to this resource guide in various ways.
We are grateful for their assistance.*

*This guide is dedicated
to all grandparents
who have taken responsibility
for raising their children's children.
We appreciate their unselfish caregiving
which is often not recognized.*

Printed and distributed by the
Massachusetts Executive Office of Elder Affairs
Massachusetts Executive Office of Health and Human Services
Massachusetts Department of Education

The collaborating agencies of this guide encourage and give permission
for the duplication and distribution of this material.
This material is available on line at www.800ageinfo.com

INTRODUCTION

Assuming the responsibility of raising a grandchild(ren) is often an unanticipated situation for grandparents. Identifying financial, social, health and legal resources can be confusing, difficult and time consuming. Knowing what services and programs are available and where to obtain access and information is essential in managing their new family situation and parenting responsibilities. This manual was developed as a guide to assist grandparents and other kinship caregivers to locate and obtain needed resources.

The Executive Office of Elder Affairs first initiated this project in 1994 and developed it in collaboration with the Executive Office of Health and Human Services. Both agencies recognize the complex situations grandparents face in raising grandchildren. This guide provides basic information and program descriptions of relevant State agencies and offers suggestions in contacting other public and private resources. It is not inclusive of all available resources and should not be considered exhaustive.

The growing number of grandparents raising grandchildren is a social phenomenon not isolated to any particular ethnic group, geographical location, or economic circumstance. In many situations, drug and alcohol seriously affect the parents' capacity to care for their children. Other circumstances that lead grandparents to raising their children's children include mental illness, incarceration, teen pregnancy, death and abandonment.

Grandparents' traditional roles change dramatically when they assume the total responsibility of caring for their grandchildren. Although each family situation is unique, there are many similar needs and concerns. The well-being of all family members is essential -- meeting the needs of both children and grandparents is of equal concern. Consideration and better support for these families are developing as the public and policy makers become aware of this social issue and of the unmet needs and concerns of these grandparent headed families.

We hope this third edition of *A Resource Guide for Massachusetts' Grandparents Raising their Grandchildren* will be a useful source of information for you.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>I. GLOSSARY OF TERMS</u>	<u>1</u>
<u>II. OPTIONS AND CONSIDERATIONS</u>	<u>7</u>
<u>III. OVERVIEW OF AGENCIES AND SERVICES</u>	<u>9</u>
Executive Office of Health and Human Services	9
Commission for the Blind	9
Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing	11
Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission	12
Office of Child Care Services	14
Department of Mental Health	16
Department of Mental Retardation	18
Department of Public Health	20
Department of Transitional Assistance	21
Department of Social Services	22
Department of Youth Services	23
Office of Refugees and Immigrants	24
Division of Medical Assistance	25
Department of Education	26
Executive Office of Elder Affairs	27
Social Security Administration	29
Children in Need of Services (CHINS)	30
<u>IV. FINANCIAL INFORMATION</u>	<u>31</u>
Transitional Aid to families with Dependent Children	31
Emergency Aid to the Elderly, Disabled and Children	31
Energy Assistance Programs	32
Food Stamps	32
MassHealth / Medical Assistance	33
Social Security	33
Supplemental Security Income	33
Unemployment	34

V. LEGAL INFORMATION **35**

Frequently Asked Questions	35
Legal Assistance and Information	54

VI. HEALTH INFORMATION **58**

Government Health Programs	58
Immunization Information	63
AIDS Information	64
Substance Abuse Information	66

VII. CHILD CARE INFORMATION **69**

VIII. COUNSELING/MENTAL HEALTH **71**

IX. DISABILITY INFORMATION **72**

X. HOUSING **77**

XI. GRANDPARENT SUPPORT GROUPS **82**

XII. ADDITIONAL RESOURCES **91**

XIII. HELPFUL HINTS **98**

I. GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Adoption: becoming the legal parent of a child that is not biologically one's own.

Adoption subsidy: consists of financial assistance and/or MassHealth assistance after the legal consummation of the adoption of a child with special needs by certain adopting parents.

Adoption surrender: a voluntary adoption surrender by parents transfers the custody of a child to DSS for the purposes of adoption.

Care: a child in the care of the Department of Social Services receives services from the Department pursuant to a Voluntary Placement Agreement.

Children in Need of Services: CHINS is a court action initiated by a parent or legal guardian against a child who is out of control or a runaway from home. In the case of school related problems, the school would initiate a CHINS court action.

Commission for the Blind: MCB is a state agency which provides services and MassHealth assistance to blind and legally blind individuals who are Massachusetts residents and who meet eligibility requirements.

Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing: MCDHH is a state agency which provides specialized services to people of all ages who are deaf, late deafened and hard of hearing, information to family members, and technical assistance and training to agencies.

Custody: if a child is placed in the custody of the Department of Social Services (DSS) it is through a court order. Custody of a child does not always involve DSS. Custody includes the power to: 1) determine the child's place of abode, medical care, and education; 2) control visits to the child; and 3) consent to enlistments, marriages, and other contracts.

Emergency Custody: temporary custody granted in an emergency situation.

Permanent Custody: legal custody, which is permanent in nature, granted after a court process.

Physical Custody: custody, not through a legal process, but because the child is physically in the care of the custodian. This is an informal arrangement between the parent and the caregiver.

Voluntary Care: a parent or guardian can voluntarily sign a voluntary placement agreement with DSS placing the child in a substitute care placement in certain circumstances.

Department of Education: DOE is the state agency responsible for implementing the Massachusetts Education Reform Act of 1993. It provides substantial financial and technical support to public schools in areas including curriculum, school safety, guidance, buildings, teacher certification, bilingual education, vocational education, and special education. It also monitors the implementation of State and Federal education laws and regulations.

Department of Housing and Community Development: DHCD is a state agency that provides financial and technical assistance to communities, administers a variety of housing assistance programs, energy assistance and conservation programs.

Department of Mental Health: DMH is a state agency which provides services to children and adults with serious or long term mental illness, who meet Department eligibility criteria.

Department of Mental Retardation: DMR is a state agency which provides services and support to adults with mental retardation and children with mental retardation/developmental disabilities, who meet Department eligibility criteria.

Department of Public Health: DPH is a state agency which provides education in individual, family and community health, some direct services, and regulation of the state's health care system.

Department of Social Services: DSS is a state agency which receives and responds to reports of child abuse and neglect, and whose mission is to protect children and strengthen families.

Department of Transitional Assistance: DTA is a state agency which provides cash assistance, food stamp benefits, and/or other services to individuals who meet the Department's financial and non-financial eligibility criteria.

Department of Youth Services: DYS is the juvenile correction agency for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The Department provides services to individuals between ages 7 - 21 who have been found guilty of a crime or who are awaiting trial and held on a bail status at the request of the court.

Division of Medical Assistance: DMA is a state agency which provides MassHealth medical insurance (Medicaid) or CommonHealth insurance to income eligible individuals.

Emergency Aid to Elderly, Disabled and Children: EAEDC is a program through DTA which provides a monthly cash grant, limited medical coverage, and some other services to elderly, disabled, children, and families who meet guidelines.

Emergency Assistance: a program through DTA which provides some rent arrearage assistance for families with children under 21 who live with them, and who meet household income and asset guidelines.

Executive Office of Elder Affairs: Elder Affairs is a cabinet level state agency which is responsible for the development and management of comprehensive community-based programs for citizens 60 and over. Elder Affairs provides services through an extensive network of public and private agencies.

Executive Office of Health and Human Service: EOHHS is a cabinet level state agency which oversees the Commonwealth's human service agencies. EOHHS provides no direct services but oversees such agencies as the Department of Transitional Assistance, Department of Public Health, Department of Social Services, Department of Mental Health, Department of Mental Retardation, and the Division of Medical Assistance.

Family Reunification: whenever possible and appropriate, the ultimate goal of DSS is to bring families back together.

Food Stamps: food stamp benefits are used to purchase food through an Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) card used at the grocery store. Food stamp benefits are provided to eligible individuals through the Department of Transitional Assistance.

Foster Care: a program through the Department of Social Services in which children are placed temporarily with individuals who have been approved through the Department. Foster parents receive financial reimbursement and services for the children.

Guardianship: a legal process in which one individual is granted authority by the court to act on behalf of another. The guardian may be given authority to make personal, financial, and medical decisions.

Temporary Guardian: authority is limited to actions that are reasonably necessary to prevent harm to the ward -- generally appointed for a 90 day period.

Permanent Guardian: authority for managing both the person and the estate of the

ward.

Limited Guardianship: the court limits the authority of the guardian to particular areas where the ward is unable to make decisions.

Standby Guardianship: a parent or a legal guardian can petition to have the court approve in advance a person to take over the care of the child in the event that the parent or legal guardian becomes incapacitated or dies.

Housing:

Federally Assisted Housing (Public Housing): rental housing built and operated with financial help from the federal government and designed for low-income families of all ages. Some buildings have been specifically designed to meet the needs of low-income persons age 62 and over.

Rental Assistance (Housing Assistance Section 8): Federal government program that provides financial assistance to older people and others with qualifying low incomes.

State-funded Housing (family and elderly/disabled): rental housing built and operated by local Housing Authorities with oversight by DHCD.

Intake Worker: the staff member with whom one deals in making initial application to an agency.

Kinship Care: the full time nurturing and protection of children in a family setting by relatives or those adults to whom a child and the child's parents and family members ascribe a "family" relationship.

MassHealth (Medicaid): health care insurance provided through the Division of Medical Assistance to individuals and families who meet eligibility criteria.

Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission: MRC is a state agency which provides comprehensive services for eligible persons with disabilities toward the goal of employment and independence.

Medicare: a federal health insurance program for persons aged 65 and over and for certain disabled people under age 65. The program is administered by the Health Care Financing Administration.

Office of Child Care Services: OCCS is a state agency which establishes and enforces standards for family child care, center based child care, school age child care, and residential and placement programs. OCCS also administers child care subsidies for income eligible families.

Office of Refugees and Immigrants: ORI is a federally funded state agency which advocates for and coordinates state services for refugees and immigrants.

Ombudsman/Customer or Client Services/Consumer Affairs: the department/unit in a state agency which handles complaints and concerns of clients or customers.

Parent Aide: individual trained to assist in teaching parenting skills -- sometimes provided by DSS through contracted agencies.

Permanency Mediation: a specialized dispute resolution approach that addresses the unique issues involved in both care and protection trials and dispenses with the need for parental consent to adoption trials. This approach is an alternative to contested court proceeding. An independent third party facilitates a child centered family focused approach to permanency planning which includes active participation of family members and decision making.

Respite Care: some state agencies provide assistance with care for short periods of time, often in the case of caretaker illness or special needs of the child.

Restraining Order: court order directing that certain things be done, or that certain actions or things not be done, including orders requiring an individual to keep away from another person.

Emergency Restraining Order: can be granted at any time through the police and judge on call -- used in emergency situations.

Temporary Restraining Order: granted by the court after a complaint has been filed.

Permanent Restraining Order: granted by the judge after a court hearing.

Restricted Substitute Care Provider: an individual who is approved by DSS as foster parent only for a specific individual or individuals. For example, a grandparent could be approved to care for their grandchild only, rather than any child in need of services. In those cases where DSS has care or custody of the child, the grandparent would be eligible to receive support and services from DSS.

Social Security: a federal insurance program for participating wage earners for Retirement, Survivors, and Disability benefits. It is administered by the Social Security Administration.

Retirement: Social Security retirement income is paid to retired individuals who have worked the required number of quarters under Social Security.

Disability: Social Security Disability can be received at any age -- it is granted to individuals determined to be disabled under social security guidelines. People can collect under their own earnings or those of a parent, and in some cases, a spouse or grandparent.

Survivors: certain relations, such as widows, children, and dependent parents can collect under a deceased family member's earnings.

Supplemental Security Income: SSI is a federal/state needs based program administered by the Social Security Administration. It provides monthly income to eligible persons who are disabled, blind, or elderly, and who have both low income and low financial resources. People eligible for SSI also automatically receive MassHealth.

Transitional Aid to Families with Dependent Children: TAFDC includes a monthly cash grant, medical assistance, and other benefits provided to eligible families through the Department of Transitional Assistance.

Unemployment: a program which pays benefits to eligible unemployed workers. Unemployment is managed through the Department of Employment and Training.

A Tribute to Grandparents Who Are Raising Their Grandchildren

G Grandchildren, to whom they are so devoted
R Remarkable Resourcefulness Raising their grandchildren; the Richness of their heritage
A Admiration and Appreciation for their Achievements and Accomplishments
N Needs that have to be addressed in a No-Nonsense fashion
D Determination; Devotion; Dedication; Diversity
P Preservation of family; Priorities; Public Policy; Problem solvers
A Awareness they have created as Active Ardent Advocates
R Responsiveness and sense of Responsibility; Rewarding Role model they've created; Respect from all
E Empowerment, and Enriching their grandchildren's lives; the Experience they bring
N Noteworthy National visibility
T Tough and Tenacious Trainers and Teachers; Togetherness
S Strength and Sacrifice; Sense of Sharing - Superb Supportive Surrogate parents

by Janet Sainer, Relatives as Parents Program, The Brookdale Foundation Group

II. OPTIONS AND CONSIDERATIONS

Once a grandparent has made the decision to care for their grandchild, there are a number of different ways in which care can be assumed. Each way presents different possibilities, in terms of the programs and services one would be eligible to receive.

ADOPTION

Adoption means the child is formally (legally) adopted. This process is done through the courts and requires an attorney to represent both the child and the adoptive parent. It may also require testimony that the biological parents are unfit. Once adoption is completed, the adoptive parents assume the rights and responsibilities of biological parents. The family/child may continue to be eligible for some financial and/or MassHealth services via the Adoption Subsidy Program if the child was adopted through DSS. This is a separate approval system completed prior to the legalization of the adoption.

CUSTODY

Custody is granted through a court process. A child is taken into custody by DSS when removal from the home is ordered by the court.

FOSTER CARE

If a grandparent chooses to become a foster parent to his/her grandchild, it will be as a restricted substitute care provider. When DSS has care or custody of the child, this means going through the screening and approval process with DSS and entitles the family to additional services: financial subsidy, MassHealth, and case management services. The child/family is eligible for these services regardless of caretaker income.

GUARDIANSHIP

In a guardianship situation, the grandparent may be granted legal custody of the grandchild through a court process. The guardian is therefore generally able to make medical and financial decisions for the ward. In a Department of Social Services sponsored guardianship a child may continue to receive subsidy payments, in an amount equal to that of foster care payments.

PHYSICAL CUSTODY

A grandparent who has only physical custody of the child does not have legal rights, although the court may be favorably disposed to the grandparent should a custody hearing take place. With physical custody, the caretaker may be eligible for Transitional Aid to Families with Dependent Children assistance assuming the person is otherwise eligible.

Some grandparents may become involved with the Department of Social Services when assuming care for a grandchild. DSS is the state agency which is mandated by law to respond to reports of child abuse and neglect, and provide services to families and children. The goal of DSS in working with children is family reunification, or permanency planning (e.g., adoption or guardianship) for the child when reunification is not possible.

A child may be referred to the Department of Social Services in one of three ways:

- A family member may file an application with DSS requesting specific action.
- A CHINS (children in need of services) petition may be filed in court.
- DSS has investigated a report of suspected abuse or neglect, and the child/family has been determined to be in need of assistance.

When a child is determined to be in need of placement with someone other than the parents, the Department of Social Services looks to relatives first: grandparents, as well as other relatives. The caretaker arrangement may then fall into one of several categories.

If the child has been referred involuntarily to DSS the child can still be placed with the grandparents. This would mean that the grandparents are considered to be foster parents, or "restricted substitute care providers", (approved only for particular relations). These placements are often referred to as "Kinship" placements. If the grandparents wish to be considered as caregivers for non-related children as well, they may apply to become foster parents, and go through foster parent training.

Whether the grandparent is acting as a foster parent or a restricted substitute care provider, the child will be eligible for MassHealth, and for foster care payment benefits, and services. This is true regardless of the caregiver's income.

If the child is receiving DSS services through voluntary referral and is living with the grandparents, he or she may receive either the foster care payment benefit or the Transition to Families with Dependent Children (TAFDC) payment but not both. In order to receive foster care monies from DSS, the child needs to be in DSS care/custody and DSS must have been the one to place the child with the grandparent. If a grandparent has custody through a guardianship or just physical custody and then applies for monies to DSS "after the fact" they are not likely to be given money by DSS.

If the grandparents have assumed care for the child and DSS is not involved, the grandparent caregivers are eligible to receive the TAFDC payment and MassHealth for the child. The grandparents' income has no bearing on this eligibility. The TAFDC benefits are only for the grandchild. In instances where DSS is involved with the child, a social worker will visit the home on a monthly basis, there will be meetings at regular intervals, and the child may be eligible for additional services.

III. OVERVIEW OF AGENCIES AND SERVICES

There are a number of agencies which a grandparent might contact in obtaining assistance. However, it is often a confusing process to get to the correct agency, and the appropriate person within the agency.

When navigating the system, there are generally a number of workers with whom an individual will deal. During the initial application phase, most communication is with an intake worker. Once eligibility has been determined, a social worker, caseworker, or case manager is assigned. If found ineligible for services, an individual may obtain information about the agency appeal process from the worker, or it may be outlined on the denial letter.

It may also be helpful to know that many state agencies have a client services office (also called customer services, consumer affairs, or ombudsman services). Staff in these departments hear complaints and concerns, and assist an individual in obtaining appropriate services should a problem arise.

The commissions and agencies below are within the

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES (EOHHS)

Website: www.state.ma.us/eohhs/

MASSACHUSETTS COMMISSION FOR THE BLIND (MCB)

www.state.ma/mcb/

Eligibility: MCB provides a variety of services to blind/legally blind consumers who are residents of Massachusetts.

Financial Assistance: MCB provides some financial assistance to eligible consumers, as well as funding a consumer's stay in certain programs.

Programs/Services:

Children's Services

College Scholarship Assistance

Deaf Blind/Multi handicapped (T22) Services

Financial Assistance

Independent Living Services

Job Training and Placement

Medical Assistance to Eligible Individuals

Orientation and Mobility Training

Referral to Talking Book Program

Contact: For all programs/services.

Regional Offices:

Western Massachusetts
(413) 781-1290; 1-800-332-2772 voice/TDD

Central Massachusetts
(508) 754-1148; 1-800-392-6450 x0522

Northeastern Massachusetts
(617) 727-5550; 1-800-392-6450

Greater Boston
(617) 727-5550; 1-800-392-6450

Southeastern Mass./Cape Cod
(508) 993-6140; 1-800-392-6450

Boston-Brookline
(617) 727-5550; 1-800-392-6450
TDD telephone 1-800-392-6556



I love my Grandma. She does nice things.
Sometimes we garden, early in the spring.
I live with my Grandma. She is my best bud.
I love my Grandpa. too!
I ride in his truck.
Grandpa has to be very old.
That's how you get to be a Grandparent."

~Tyler, age 5, a grandchild being raised by his grandparents in Massachusetts.~



**MASSACHUSETTS COMMISSION FOR THE DEAF
AND HARD OF HEARING (MCDHH)**

www.state.ma.us/mcdhh/

Eligibility: MCDHH is the principal agency on behalf of deaf, late deafened, and hard of hearing individuals of all ages who are in need of specialized information or social, educational communication access, and human services.

Financial Assistance: MCDHH does not provide financial assistance other than a small fund for purchase of interpreter and Computer Aided Real-time Translation Reporter Services (CART) in situations when other entities are not mandated to pay (such as funerals and certain job interviews).

MCDHH assists clients to obtain services from other agencies for which they are eligible and in identifying avenues for pursuit of complaints regarding poor quality of services leading to financial loss (such as hearing aid sales complaints).

Programs /Services: the Department for Interpreter Services maintains and coordinates the statewide Interpreter and CART Referral Service and screens and approves interpreters.

Department of Casemanagement and Social Services: provides information, referral and direct service to assist clients and their families to solve life problems, bilingual case management service (ASL and English), cross-agency case coordination, and technical assistance to other state agencies.

Contracted services:

Independent Living Programs for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing provide a broad range of services such as skills training, peer mentoring, and community education delivered by persons who are themselves deaf or hard of hearing.

Contact:

Greater Boston
Boston/Brookline
617-695-7500 voice
617-695-7650 TTY

Central MA
508-755-4084 voice
508-753-5921 voice/TTY

Southeast MA/Cape Cod
508-746-8408 voice
508-746-8350 TTY

Western MA
413-788-6427 voice/TTY

Northeastern MA
617-695-7500 voice
617-695-7600 TTY
1-800-882-1155 voice

MASSACHUSETTS REHABILITATION COMMISSION (MRC)

www.state.ma.us/mrc/

Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) is the state agency which provides comprehensive services with and for eligible people with disabilities, except for persons who are blind, toward the goals of employment and independence.

Programs/Services:

The Vocational Rehabilitation Division: The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) is an employment focused program for people with physical and/or mental disabilities whose handicapping conditions present barriers to employment and who can benefit from VR. Once eligible, a variety of employment oriented services may be provided for an individual. Programs include:

Community Based Employment Services: locally based grants providing transitional supported work services for people with disabilities.

Extended Employment Program: provides employment for severely disabled persons who can maintain at least 25% work productivity in a work setting.

Statewide Employment Services: SES administer programs and provides supports to assist people with severe disabilities who are unserved or underserved to obtain and retain employment with long term supports as needed.

Transitional Services: for students "Turning 22" in cooperation with other EOHHS agencies.

Services for Deaf Individuals: provided via a statewide network of specialized rehabilitation counselors at the area office.

Bilingual Specialties Services: available at each area office by arrangement.

The Independent Living Division: The Independent Living Division (IL) provides coordination, information, referral and counseling to people

with severe physical and/or mental disabilities. Its' goal is to assist individuals with severe disabilities to live independently in the community. Services are primarily intended for persons not yet ready to enter VR division programs. Programs include:

IL Centers/Programs: - a statewide network of centers and programs which provide a variety of services to individuals with severe disabilities so they may live independently.

Home Care Assistance Program: provides Homemaking Services for adults with disabilities, ages 18-59, who live alone and/or with minor children under age 18, and are at risk of hospitalization.

Personal Care Assistance: provides in-home assistance with personal care needs to people with severe mobility impairments who are employed. New applicants will be referred to MassHealth (CommonHealth).
management services to people who have sustained a traumatic

Statewide Head Injury Program (SHIP): provides case head injury. SHIP works with private vendors, hospital, neuro-psychologists and other agencies to develop programs and to deliver services to meet individual client needs.

Consumer Involvement Program: provides an agency-wide communications structure for receiving input from consumers in an effort to support the operation of the Rehabilitation Advisory Councils and other consumer rehabilitation forums.

Protective Services: - for people with disabilities who may be abused by their caregiver.

The Disability Determination Services Division: The Disability Determination Services Division (DDS) determines eligibility for Social Security Disability Income (SSDI) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) for individuals who have a medically determined physical or mental impairment which precludes them from working for 12 months or more, or is expected to result in death. DDS is federally funded and regulated by the Social Security Administration and managed by MRC.

Contact: For more information call the appropriate telephone numbers listed below. All lines are TDD accessible.

Administration Offices
TDD answering machine
General Information

617-204-3600; 1-800-245-6543
617-204-3868
617-204-3600

Ombudsperson	617-204-3600
Commissioner's Office	617-204-3600
Van Adaptation/Adaptive Housing	617-204-3855
Injured Worker's Program	617-204-3855
Eligibility Unit/Turning 22	617-204-3851
Supportive Work Program	617-204-3854
MRC Protective Services	617-204-3862
Disabled Persons Protection Commission Hot Line	1-800-426-9009
Extended Employment	617-204-3854
Services for the Deaf	617-204-3734
Independent Living Division	617-204-3850
Home Care Assistance	1-800-223-2559
Statewide Head Injury Program	617-204-3852
Personal Care Assistance (MassHealth)	1-800-223-2559
Consumer Involvement	617-204-3851
Disability Determination Services Division	1-800-223-3212 (TDD)
	1-800-422-7200 (Boston)
	1-800-551-5532 (Worcester)

OFFICE OF CHILD CARE SERVICES (OCCS)
www.qualitychildcare.org/

The Office of Child Care Services (OCCS) is the state agency which is responsible for promoting services to children and assuring the coordinated development of children's services throughout the Commonwealth.

Programs/Services:

Regulatory and Licensing Function: OCCS establishes and enforces health and safety standards to protect children who are being cared for out of their homes.

Complaint Investigation and Monitoring: An important part of OCCS' licensing function is the responsibility to ensure that child care facilities operate within the safety and health requirements of the regulations.

Criminal Record Investigation: OCCS conducts checks of prospective child care workers to determine whether there is any criminal history.

Professional Standards: OCCS maintains a teacher qualification system to certify day care staff.

Resource Coordination: OCCS provides technical assistance, funding, and other resources to a range of programs serving children, such as the Children's Trust Fund (a

resource for programs to prevent child abuse), and the Child Care Resource and Referral agencies which provide referral to day care and counseling on selecting day care. See section on Child Care page 69.

Contact: For all programs/services.

Northeast MA
66 Cherry Hill Dr.
Beverly, MA 01915
Tel: 617-727-6853
Fax: 617-727-2533

Western MA
53 Capital Dr.
W. Springfield, MA 01089
Tel: 413-788-8401
Fax: 413-784-1227

Southeast MA
109 Rhode Island Rd.
Lakeville, MA 02347
Tel: 508-727-1444
Fax: 508-947-5255

Central MA
180 Turnpike Rd.
Westboro, MA 01581
Tel: 508-871-7181
Fax: 508-871-7190

Boston Area
1515 Hancock St.
Quincy, MA 02169
Tel: 617-472-2881
Fax: 617-472-2722

Children's Trust Fund
10 West St.
Boston, MA 02111
Tel: 617-727-8957
Fax: 617-727-8997

Area Offices:

Western Mass.	Northampton (413) 784-1790; (413) 584-1644
Central Mass.	Worcester (508) 752-4681; (508) 792-7503
Northeast Mass.	Tewksbury (978) 851-7321; (978) 777-4506
Metro-West	Westborough (508) 792-7400 x2074

Metro-Suburban	Medfield (508) 359-7312 x4600; (617) 727-9830 x4600
Southeastern Mass.	Brockton (508) 580-0800 x201; (617) 727-7905
Metro Boston	Boston (617) 727-4923 x301

DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH (DMH)

www.state.ma.us/dmh

Eligibility: DMH provides continuing care services, as described below, to persons who meet its eligibility criteria. Except in limited circumstances, no individual may receive continuing care services or supports from DMH unless he/she is determined eligible for such services by DMH subsequent to the submission and approval of an application. Eligibility is based on three components: 1) the presence of a long-term or serious mental illness in an adult or serious emotional disturbance/mental illness in a child or adolescent; 2) the severity of the illness as indicated by the level of functioning of the individual; and 3) duration of the illness.

Financial Assistance: DMH provides no cash grants or financial aid to clients but will fund services for the individual if determined eligible.

Program/Services: DMH provides an array of continuing care services to eligible recipients. Generally, those services fall into the following categories:

Inpatient Continuing Care: May be provided at state hospitals for adults who need longer term hospitalization and rehabilitation. There are also specialized inpatient units for adolescents.

Residential: Including a whole range of residential services for adults and children/adolescents ranging from 24 hour supervised programs to independent living settings with supports.

Supportive Mental Health and Rehabilitation: Including a range of ongoing treatment and rehabilitative services in the community such as supported employment, clubhouses, assertive community treatment teams, medication management, day treatment, after school programs, day rehabilitative programs and outpatient programs.

Case Management Forensic Services: Including community based court clinics and inpatient forensic evaluations for people referred by the courts who need assessments for competency to stand trial or criminal responsibility.

Contact: For all programs/services is the area offices. This is where eligibility assessments are conducted and services are arranged. There are six (6) DMH area offices.

Area Offices:

Western Massachusetts	Northampton	(413) 587-6200
Central Massachusetts	Worcester	(508) 368-3838
Northeast	Tewksbury	(978) 863-5000
Metro Suburban	Medfield	(508) 242-8000
Southeastern	Brockton	(508) 897-2000
Metro Boston	Boston	(617) 626-9200

MENTAL HEALTH EMERGENCY SERVICE PROGRAM NUMBERS*

When a person is acutely in need of service, and may have been determined to be of danger to themselves or others, treatment is usually obtained in a psychiatric hospital or psychiatric unit in an acute care hospital. An individual can be admitted to a psychiatric unit through the emergency room of an acute care hospital by a physician, the police, a therapist or a mental health crisis team. The Massachusetts Department of Mental Health has crisis teams in all areas of the state, and may be reached 24 hours per day.

Western Massachusetts

Berkshire (Central/South)	(413) 499-0412
Berkshire (North)	(413) 664-4541
Franklin County/No. Quabbin	(413) 774-5411
evenings/weekends:	(978) 249-0311; 1-(800)-562-0112
Hampshire County	(413) 586-5555
Holyoke/Chicopee	(413) 536-2251
Springfield	(413) 733-6661
Westfield	(413) 568-6386

Central Massachusetts

Fitchburg	(800)-977-5555; (978) 534-3372
Gardner	(978) 632-9400; (978) 630-3085
Milford	(508) 634-3420
Southbridge	(508) 765-9771 ext. 2586
Worcester	(508) 856-3562

Northeast

Beverly	(888)-550-4433
Greater Lawrence	(978) 683-3128
Greater Lowell	(800)-830-5177 or (978) 454-5844
Haverhill/Newburyport	(978) 521-7777 or (800) 281-3223
Lynn	(781) 596-9211; 1-(800)-988-1111
Wakefield/Everett	1-(800)-988-1111

Wakefield

781) 596-9222 or 1-(800)-988-1111

Metro Suburban

East Suburban

(781) 860-0570; 1-(800)-540-5806

TDD/Deaf (781) 860-0570

West Suburban

(508) 872-3333; 1-(800)-640-5432

Southwest Suburban

(781) 769-8674 or 1-(800)-529-5077

South Suburban

(617) 774-6036; 1-(800)-528-4890

Southeastern

Brockton

(508) 897-2100

Cape Cod & Islands

(508) 778-4627

Fall River

(508) 235-7277

New Bedford

(508) 996-3154

Plymouth

(800) 469-9888

Taunton/Attleboro

(508) 285-9400; 1-(800)-660-4300

Metro Boston

(Area-Wide) Boston Emergency Service Team B.E.S.T.

1-(800)-981-HELP

Cambridge-Somerville (Cambridge Hospital)

(617) 665-1560; (617) 665-1572

*These are 24-hour emergency service programs primarily funded by the Department of Mental Health and the Division of Medical Assistance. Their function is to provide emergency screening services, short-term crisis counseling, crisis stabilization, and referral to acute inpatient services for those who cannot be stabilized in the community.

The services are targeted to those persons who are considered to present a danger to themselves or others by reason of mental illness and are in need of immediate intervention.

DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL RETARDATION (DMR)

www.dmr.state.ma.us/

Eligibility: DMR serves individual adults, based on availability, who are 18 years of age and over if the individual is a resident of the Commonwealth; is an individual with mental retardation as defined by DMR regulations; and is in need of specialized services and supports in two or more of the following adaptive skill areas: communication, self-care, home living, community use, health and safety, functional academics, and work. DMR serves children, funding permitting, who are under 18 years of age if the individual meets the federal definition of a developmental disability and is a resident of the Commonwealth.

Financial Assistance: DMR does not provide direct cash assistance; however, through contracted service providers, stipends are made available to families to purchase supports. Examples of how these stipends may be used include purchasing specialized equipment which the consumer needs, but which is not covered by health insurance; or making modifications to a home to eliminate physical barriers and increase handicap accessibility.

Programs/Services/Supports:

Residential: provides a variety of supports in varying residential locations, including 24 hour staff supported homes, homes with less than 24 hour staff, home providers.

Work/Day: provides a variety of support in work/day settings, including supported and integrated employment, sheltered work, education and training, day habitation.

Vocational Services: provide a variety of training and employment programs.

Family: provides a variety of supports at home to families on an ongoing or intermittent basis to enable the family to remain together. This includes respite supports.

Contact: For all programs/services.

Area Offices:

<u>Western Region</u>	(413) 731-7742
Franklin/Hampshire	(413) 586-4948
Berkshire	(413) 447-7381
Holyoke/Chicopee	(413) 535-1022
Springfield	(413) 784-1339
Westfield	(413) 562-1599

<u>Central Region</u>	(508) 792-7790
North Central	(508) 792-7490
Worcester	(508) 792-7545
South Valley	(508) 792-7756
South Valley/Milford	(508) 792-7749

<u>Northeastern Region</u>	(978) 774-5000
Lowell	(978) 970-0223

<u>Metro Boston Region</u>	(617) 727-5608
Harbor	(617) 624-0430
West Boston/Brookline	(617) 325-1155
Dorchester/Fuller	(617) 626-8719
Charles River West	(617) 623-5950
Newton/South Norfolk	(508) 668-3679
Central Middlesex	(781) 646-5500
Middlesex West	(508) 879-1111
South Coastal	(781)-337-2165

Merrimack Valley	(978) 521-9432
Metro North	(781) 246-5745
North Shore	(978) 762-8368

<u>Southeastern Region</u>	(508) 866-5000
Taunton/Attleboro	(508) 824-0614
Fall River	(508) 730-1209
Brockton	(508) 427-5731
New Bedford	(508) 992-1848
Cape Cod/Islands	(508) 771-2595
Plymouth	(508) 866-3689

<u>Metro Boston Region</u>	(617) 727-5608 ext. 7512
Harbor	(617) 624-0430
West Boston/Brookline	(617) 325-1155
Dorchester/Fuller	(617) 626-8719
Charles River West	(617) 623-5950

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH (DPH)

www.state.ma.us/dph/

Eligibility: DPH maintains a variety of programs, which have different eligibility criteria.

Financial Assistance: DPH provides no cash grants but may assist in funding a client's stay in a program, or providing low or no cost services.

Programs/Services:

The Division of Maternal, Child and Family Health: offers a number of health care programs providing and supporting high quality prenatal, pediatric, and adolescent care.

The Division for Special Health Needs: offers a variety of intervention and family support programs for children, youth, and adults.

The Office of Oral Health: provides resource information for dental health prevention programs, and dental care for special needs populations.

The Division of Community Health Promotion: offers health promotion and prevention programs for individuals of all ages, including programs in schools and community settings.

The Massachusetts Tobacco Control Program: a statewide campaign comprised of advertising and community relations, statewide cessation and education initiatives and grants to local boards of health, schools, community agencies and health advocacy organizations.

Contact: Please see the Health Information portion of the Additional Resources section of this guide for numbers to particular programs or call the following regional offices.

DPH Regional Offices:

Western Region (Northampton) (413) 586-7525

Central Region (West Boylston) (508) 792-7880

Northeast Region (Tewksbury) (978) 851-7261

Southeast Region (Lakeville) (508) 947-1231

Metro-West Region (Canton) (781) 828-7700

Greater Boston (Boston) (617) 727-1115

The Department of Public Health also provides services to the homeless, tuberculosis control, and AIDS and drug rehabilitation programs. (Please see separate sections on AIDS and Substance Abuse.)

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSITIONAL ASSISTANCE (DTA)

www.state.ma.us/dta/

Eligibility: DTA has different eligibility criteria for different programs; but there is always a financial component. To inquire about eligibility for a specific program, it is best to call your local DTA office and ask for an intake worker. Specific income levels have not been listed because they are subject to change as the laws change.

Financial Assistance: DTA provides a number of different cash grants, and types of payment assistance. Please refer to the specific programs listed below.

Programs/Services:

Transitional Aid to Families with Dependent Children:

Eligibility: Families with children under age 18 or 19.
 Certain pregnant women with no children.

Benefits: Monthly cash grant.
 Medical assistance.
 Crib and Layette.
 First \$50 of child support.
 Burial expenses.
 Emergency Assistance.
 Transportation Assistance.

Requirements: Must meet nonfinancial requirements.

Must be within asset and income limits.

Emergency Aid to Elderly, Disabled, and Children:

Eligibility: Elderly individuals, over the age of 65.
Disabled individuals in accordance with DTA medical standards.
Actively participating in a Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission
program.
Persons caring for an incapacitated individual.
High school students under 21.
Certain caretaker families who do not qualify for TAFDC.

Benefits: Monthly cash grant.
Medical assistance.
Burial expenses.
Transportation Assistance.

Requirements: Must meet non-financial requirements.
Must be within asset and income limits.

Food Stamps (Electronic Benefits Transfer):

Eligibility: Certain low-income households.

Benefits: Food stamp benefits used to purchase food through an Electronic
Benefits Transfer (EBT) card used at grocery stores.

Requirements: Must meet non-financial requirements.
Must be within asset and income limits.

Contact: For all programs/services: Local DTA Office or
DTA Application Information Unit at 1-800-249-2007
Website: www.state.ma.us/dta

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES (DSS)

www.state.ma.us/dss/

Eligibility: Children who have been abused or neglected or are deemed at high risk of abuse or neglect are eligible, as are those who are determined to be in need of services. DSS involvement can be mandated through the court OR requested by the family.

Financial Assistance: DSS provides a monthly stipend to foster parents, and sometimes, guardians and/or adoptive parents of special needs children.

Programs/Services: DSS provides a variety of services based on need. These services are available to open cases only.

Adoption and guardianship: Assistance for children who are legally free to be adopted.

Foster care: for children who have been removed from their homes.

Emergency shelter care: for children who are in an emergency situation.

Parent Aides: to assist and teach parents in coping with their children.

Casemanagement services: to assist parents and children in obtaining appropriate resources.

Counseling: both individual and group via contracts with community agencies.

Contact: For all programs/services. Local Office of Department of Social Services. You may call 617-748-2000 to find the location of your local office

DEPARTMENT OF YOUTH SERVICES (DYS)

Eligibility: DYS is responsible for the custody and treatment of youth who have been found guilty or delinquent by the courts and who are committed to state custody up until the youth's 18th or 21st birthday. DYS also holds youth on a bail status at the request of the court and will provide limited resources for youth who are referred by Juvenile Probation Department.

Financial Assistance: DYS provides no cash grants but will obtain resources for treatment for its committed population.

Programs/Services:

Secure or non-secure residential settings.

Casework services.

Vocational education and training.

Substance abuse counseling.

Sex offender therapy.

Violence prevention therapy.

Academic or work/study programs.

Contact: For all programs/services.

Central Office (Boston) Phone: (617) 727-7575
Fax: (617) 951-2409

Area Offices:

Western Area (413) 783-0781
Central Area (508) 893-9237
Southeast Area (508) 896-3312
Metro Area (617) 727-7575

~~~~~  
"I keep hearing that you have to use absolutely new parenting skills nowadays. I think it has to be a blend of old and new. Age and wisdom have to stand for something; there has to be a frame of reference. You have to be flexible and open and understanding. I'm always searching for new clues.

~Harriet Jackson-Lyons, founder and coordinator of Raising our Children's Children. She is raising two granddaughters in Boston.

~~~~~  
OFFICE FOR REFUGEES AND IMMIGRANTS (ORI)

www.state.ma.us/mori

Eligibility: ORI is a primarily federally funded state agency which provides programs and services for the resettlement of eligible refugees and immigrants in the state; encourages their full participation in the economic, civic and social life of the state; and advises on state policies and programs which affect them.

Financial Assistance: Cash and medical assistance for eligible refugees within their first 8 months in the U.S.; funding for community-based refugee and immigrant non-profits.

Programs/Services:

Massachusetts Refugee Resettlement Program: a cash and medical assistance and employment service program which helps newly arrived refugees and their families become self supporting. This program also provides foster care and residential mental health services for young refugees who arrive without parents and guardians.

Program to Enhance Elder Refugee Services: collaboration between elder services and refugee organizations which provides services to meet the emergency and long-term self support needs of older refugees.

Refugee Youth Services Project: outreach activities for at risk refugee youth targeted at preventing school drop-out and gang involvement; and developing academic, social and leadership skills.

Citizenship Assistance Program: statewide assistance for Massachusetts immigrants and refugees to become U.S. citizens.

Building Access to Social and Interpreter Community Services (BASICS): outreach, education and case management services to assist immigrant and refugee families to access low income assistance programs for which they are eligible.

Funding and technical assistance for community-based **refugee and immigrant non-profits.**

Contact: For all programs/services. Office for Refugees and Immigrants (617) 727-7888.

DIVISION OF MEDICAL ASSISTANCE (DMA)

www.state.ma.us/dma/

Eligibility: The Division of Medical Assistance has both income and nonfinancial eligibility criteria.

Financial Assistance: The Division provides no cash grants, but does provide MassHealth medical insurance for those who meet eligibility criteria.

Programs:

MassHealth for income eligible:

- Pregnant women.
- Individuals under 18.
- Individuals responsible for dependent children under 18 who reside with them.
- Individuals age 65 or older.
- Individuals who are determined disabled by Social Security Administration standards.

CommonHealth Full or supplemental health care benefits for:

Disabled working adults and non-working disabled adults above 133% of the Federal Poverty level.
Disabled children.

Please refer to page 59 for additional information on CommonHealth.

Kaileigh Mulligan Home Care Program for:

Severely disabled children who meet eligibility criteria.

Contact: For all programs/service. Division of Medical Assistance 1-800-841-2900

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION (DOE)

www.doe.mass.edu

Eligibility: The Massachusetts Department of Education supports and oversees public education for all Massachusetts public school students in grades pre-kindergarten through twelve, vocational/technical education, and adult basic education.

Programs/Services: The Department is responsible for implementing the Massachusetts Education Reform Act of 1993. This includes developing and implementing state curriculum frameworks and the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) which will assess students' learning in English Language Arts, History and Social Sciences, Mathematics, and Science and Technology.

The Department of Education ensures that all state and federal laws and regulations governing public education are upheld, including special education, transitional bilingual education and vocational education laws and regulations. The Department implements the educational policies set by the Board of Education, administers federal and state grant programs, establishes standards for certifying all educational personnel, and provides service and technical assistance through the development and improvement of programs and standards. Further, it administers the state's educational accountability system, and advocates for the learning needs and success of all students.

It is a paramount goal of the Commonwealth to provide all citizens - - children and adults - - the educational opportunities necessary to be lifelong learners and reach their full potential as contributing participants in the political, economic, and social life of the Commonwealth.

Contact: For information regarding all activities and materials:

Department of Education
350 Main Street
Malden, Massachusetts 02148-5023
781-338-3000
TTY 1-781-338-6854
Website: www.doe.mass.edu

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF ELDER AFFAIRS (Elder Affairs)

www.state.ma.us/elder

Eligibility: Elder Affairs maintains a variety of programs administered through local private nonprofit Aging Service Access Points, Area Agencies on Aging, municipal Councils on Aging and other agencies which serve those sixty (60) and over. Eligibility for some services is based on income and/or need.

Programs/Services:

Information and Referral: Trained counselors provide information, resources and referrals on elder-related issues. **Contact:** 1-800-AGE-INFO (1-800- 243-4636); TTY 1-800-872-0166 Consumers are also invited to visit the agency's website at www.800ageinfo.com

Home Care Program: This program is administered through 27 regional Aging Services Access Points. The services are designed to help frail elders live independently in their own home for as long as possible. In-home services are based on income and/or functional impairment level of the elder. In-home services include: case management, homemaker, personal care, home-delivered meals, laundry service, transportation, companionship, social day care, adult day health care, grocery shopping/delivery service, personal emergency response services, adaptive housing services, respite care and emergency shelter.

Nutrition Program: This program administered through statewide elder nutrition programs which offer home delivered and group meals, education, nutrition screening and counseling.

Health Insurance Counseling Program (SHINE): This program offers a network of locally based health insurance counselors who provide accurate and unbiased health insurance and benefits information, counseling and assistance.

Prescription Advantage: A new prescription drug insurance plan administered by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Prescription Advantage began providing coverage April 1, 2001 and serves all elders regardless of income, and qualified younger low-income people with disabilities. Premium, co-payment and deductible levels are based on a graduated scale according to income. To request an enrollment form or more information, call 1-800-AGE-INFO (1-800-243-4636); TTY: 1-877-610-0241.

Protective Services: Statewide system of social service professionals who investigate and, when necessary, intervene in situations where there is evidence of abuse, neglect or financial exploitation of an elder in a domestic setting. Counseling, evaluation and other services are provided as needed.

Contact: (24-hours) 1-800 922-2275.

Elder-At-Risk Program: Offers short term and focused casework services for elders who may not be able to continue living safely in the community due to their inability to provide adequate self-care. Counseling, evaluation and other services are also provided.

Contact: 1-800-922-2275.

Guardianship: Provides conservatorship and guardianship services for abused and/or neglected elders who are no longer able to manage their finances and/or make decisions about their personal care. This program can only be accessed by a protective service agency through the Executive Office of Elder Affairs.

Money Management Program: A volunteer program which offers bill paying assistance to elders who may be experiencing difficulty in managing their finances.

Contact: North Shore Elder Services (978) 750-4540.

Long Term Care Ombudsman Program: Professional staff and highly trained volunteer advocates assist elders living in licensed nursing facilities or rest homes. Services include complaint resolution, information and referral and individual and systems advocacy.

Assisted Living Ombudsman Program: This program acts as a mediator and attempts to resolve problems or conflicts that arise between an assisted living facility and one or more of its residents in the areas of health, safety, or resident rights.

Community Care Ombudsman Program: The purpose of the Community Care Ombudsman Program is to assist elders who seek help for problems or concerns with health or social services received at home or in the community including home health care, homemaker services and adult day care.

Senior Employment and Volunteer Services: Community service employment and/or volunteer opportunities for income eligible seniors.

Massachusetts Grandparent Resource Network: Provides information on local support groups and other resources for grandparents (and other kin) who are raising grandchildren.

Contact: For all programs/services, unless otherwise indicated,
1-800-AGE-INFO (1-800-243-4636)
TTY: 1-800-872-0166
Website: www.state.ma.us/elder

***Note:** Local Councils on Aging offer information and referral, transportation and other supportive services funded in part through Elder Affairs. Councils on Aging may be found in the local government listings of the white (or blue) page of your local telephone book.

SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION (Federal Agency)

www.ssa.gov

Eligibility: There are different eligibility criteria for different programs; generally based on Social Security quarters earned and relationship to the earner.

Financial Assistance: There are several different types of benefit payment programs under Social Security. Please refer to the specific programs listed below.

Programs/Services:

Social Security Retirement Income :

Eligibility: Retired individuals who have worked the required number of quarters under Social Security.

Benefits: Monthly retirement check. Eligible for Medicare coverage.

Requirements: Must have worked under social security for the required number of quarters. Must be at least 62 years of age. There are no income limits.

Social Security Disability Income (SSDI):

Eligibility: Disabled individuals (as defined by Social Security Administration standards).
Individual must be either the disabled worker or an approved relation of the disabled worker.
There is no age requirement.

Benefits: Monthly check.
Eligible for Medicare coverage if criteria for certain length of time are met.

Requirements: Claimant must be worker or approved relation of worker.
Worker must have the approved number of quarters under Social Security.

Supplemental Security Income (SSI):

Eligibility: Age 65 or older, or blind or disabled.

Benefits: Monthly check. Food stamps (in most cases).
MassHealth (in most cases)

Requirements: Must meet income and asset guidelines.

Children may be eligible for Social Security benefits on a parent's account if the child is dependent upon the parent (biological, step, or grandparent) for ongoing, substantial support at the time the parent retires, becomes disabled, or dies.

Contact: For all programs/services. Local Social Security Office, 1-800-772-1213 (nationwide); TTY 1-800-325-0778; www.ssa.gov

CHILDREN IN NEED OF SERVICES (CHINS) (M.G.L. C.119, §39E) JUVENILE COURT DEPARTMENT

Eligibility:

A child below the age of 17 who persistently runs away from home of parent or legal guardian. (Parent, legal guardian or police may initiate court action.)

A child below the age of 17 who persistently refuses to obey the lawful and reasonable commands of a parent or legal guardian, thereby resulting in the parent or legal guardian's inability to adequately care for and protect the child.
(Parent or legal guardian may initiate court action.)

A child between the ages of 6 and 16 who persistently and willfully fail to attend school.
(School authorities may initiate court action.)

A child between the ages of 6 and 16 who persistently violates the lawful and reasonable regulations of the school. (School authorities may initiate action.)

Programs/Services: Through a probation officer, the child could be referred to the appropriate public or private agency (or individual) for psychiatric, psychological, educational, occupational, medical, social or counseling services.

Contact: Juvenile Court Department

Barnstable Division (508) 362-8606
Berkshire Division (413) 443-8628
Bristol Division (508) 999-9700 x211
Essex Division (978) 725-3875
Franklin/Hampshire Division (413) 584-7686
Hampden Division (413-748-7683
Middlesex Division (617) 494-4220
Norfolk Division (781) 329-1500
Plymouth Division (508) 586-5136
Suffolk Division (617) 788-8571

IV. FINANCIAL INFORMATION

There are different types of government assistance for which a grandparent and/or grandchild may be eligible. Below is a brief synopsis of each program, and where to contact for more definitive eligibility information. Some of these programs are also detailed in the section titled *Overview of Agencies and Services* see page 9.

PROGRAMS

Transitional Aid to Families with Dependent Children (TAFDC)

<u>Agency/department:</u>	Department of Transitional Assistance
<u>Benefits:</u>	Monthly cash grant based upon the number of people in the family, income, assets, and other categorical requirements. MassHealth (medical assistance which is provided through the Division of Medical Assistance).
<u>Requirements:</u>	Income and asset limits. Nonfinancial requirements.
<u>Contact:</u>	Local Department of Transitional Assistance Office or DTA Application Information Unit at 1-800-249-2007

Emergency Aid to Elderly, Disabled, and Children

<u>Agency/department:</u>	Department of Transitional Assistance
<u>Benefits:</u>	Monthly cash grant. Medical assistance. Some additional benefits.
<u>Requirements:</u>	Income and asset limits. Nonfinancial requirements.
<u>Contact:</u>	Local Department of Transitional Assistance Office or DTA Application Information Unit at 1-800-249-2007

Energy Assistance Programs

Agency/department: Department of Housing and Community Development
(DHCD) 1 800-632-8175

Fuel Assistance

Benefits: Direct payment of heating bills, from November to March, for eligible homeowners and renters.

Weatherization

Benefits: Home energy survey; provision and installation of such items/services as air sealing, weather-stripping, storm windows, and attic and wall insulation for eligible homeowners and renters.

Heating System Services

Benefits: Emergency burner repair or replacement; system cleaning and tune-up; system repair or replacement as needed.

Requirements: For the above ENERGY PROGRAM, there are guidelines concerning: Gross annual household income, Number of household members, vulnerability to heating costs.

Contact: For specifics on application requirements, schedules, and local intake sites for all energy programs: HEATLINE 1-800 632-8175

Food Stamps

Agency/department: Department of Transitional Assistance

Benefits: Food stamp benefits used to purchase food through an Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) card used at grocery stores.

Requirements: Asset and income limits. Nonfinancial requirements.

Contact: Local Department of Transitional Assistance Office, or DTA Application Information Unit at 1-800-249-2007

MassHealth/Medical Assistance

Agency/department: Division of Medical Assistance

Benefits: MassHealth is an insurance, which covers most necessary services, such as physician's visits, hospitalization, prescription drugs and long term care facilities.

Requirements: Asset and income limits.
Nonfinancial requirements.
Individuals receiving TAFDC or SSI are automatically eligible for MassHealth.
Individuals receiving Emergency Aid to Elderly, Disabled and Children are automatically eligible for medical assistance.

Contact: MassHealth Enrollment Center at 1-800-841-2900.

Social Security

Agency/department: Social Security Administration

Benefits: Monthly check. Eligible for Medicare benefits (in some cases).

Requirements: Requirements differ for Social Security retirement income, and Social Security Disability Income. Must be retired worker, disabled worker or approved relation of disabled worker.

Contact: Local Social Security Office.

Supplemental Security Income

Agency/department Social Security Administration

Benefits: Monthly cash grant.
MassHealth.

Requirements: Non-financial requirements.
Income/asset requirements.
Age 65 or older.
Blind or disabled as defined by Social
Security guidelines (no age requirement).

Contact: Local Social Security Office or call 1-800-772-1213, TTY 1-800-325-0778

Unemployment

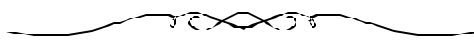
Agency/department: Division of Employment and Training

Benefits: Weekly check, based on percentage of earnings and number of dependents.

Health coverage under COBRA (a program whereby an individual may continue to pay for previous coverage at group rates for a certain length of time). Health coverage through the state under the Medical Security Plan, if unable to purchase coverage through COBRA.

Requirements: Must have been employed for a certain period of time.
Must have been laid off.
Must have completed the required waiting period.

Contact: Division of Employment and Training, Customer Services,
for information and local referral.
(617) 626-5400



The following letter is from a granddaughter living with her grandmother in Massachusetts

"Out of all the people in the world I think my grandmother is one of the strongest people I know. She has helped me and my brothers through thick and thin. She helped my younger brother all through out his whining and bad temper tantrum's. Due to the fact that he is dyslexic and does not pay attention to everything. She has called and written letters to many people asking them to help her find a teacher that understands how to teach kids with this problem.

She has been there for my older brother too. At times when he had or would get in trouble she had stood behind him helping him get through. She has also been there to pick us up when we have fallen.

She has been there for me during times I could not speak. She let me and my brothers cry on her shoulder when my mother left and when people we loved died.

She may not be the richest person in the world but she can make us feel like we are. Even having arthritis she would go through anything for us. One of the things I truly love about my grandmother is even though she doesn't have a million dollars she has a heart of gold and a very deeply loved soul. That is all a family needs to stay alive." **Michelle, age 13**

V. LEGAL INFORMATION

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Assuming the responsibility of raising a grandchild is usually accompanied by a variety of issues and concerns which may raise legal considerations. This section identifies some of the commonly asked questions by grandparents or other kin.

A. GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE

B. CUSTODY OF CHILDREN

A. GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE

1. What services and/or benefits are available to my grandchildren and me?

If you are the primary caregiver for your grandchild, you may be entitled to get cash assistance, health insurance, food stamp benefits or food checks (WIC), and/or other benefits on behalf of your grandchild. The rules for each program differ, so read about each program carefully. In addition, your legal relationship with your grandchild (i.e., whether you are the child's legal guardian, foster parent, adoptive parent, or none of the above) may affect your ability to obtain benefits for your grandchild. For more information on legal relationships, you should refer to the section on custody within this guide. If you have any questions, you should get help before you apply for benefits and/or before you make any decision regarding the legal relationship to your grandchild. You may be able to get help from local support groups, legal services offices, or the Probate and Family Court.

TRANSITIONAL AID TO FAMILIES WITH DEPENDENT CHILDREN

(M.G.L. c. 118) (106 CMR 203.000, et. seq.)

2. What is my grandchild eligible for if there is no financial support from the parents?

The child may be eligible for Transitional Aid to Families with Dependent Children (TAFDC) and Food Stamp benefits through the Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA), MassHealth through DTA, the Division of Medical Assistance (DMA), or Supplemental Security Income (SSI) through Social Security if disabled, or Social Security if the parent is disabled or deceased or retired. Benefits may also be available under the Women Infants & Children Nutrition Program (WIC) or Children's Medical Security Plan (CMSP) insurance through the Department of Public Health.

3. What is TAFDC?

"TAFDC" stands for Transitional Aid to Families with Dependent Children. TAFDC is a program that provides cash assistance to help care for children who lack parental support. A child lacks parental support when one or both parents is: absent from the home; physically or mentally incapacitated and unable to work; unemployed and cannot find work; or deceased. This program is often referred to as "welfare".

4. Who can receive TAFDC?

Both you and your grandchild(ren) may be eligible for TAFDC benefits, but the requirements for you are different than the requirements for your grandchild(ren).

5. Do I have to reveal the names of my grandson's parents in order to receive TAFDC benefits for him?

When a grandparent or other relative applies for TAFDC for a child in their care, it is required to give the names and addresses of the biological parents, (if you have this information). This information is in turn given to the Department of Revenue, who will contact the parents for child care support. There are certain situations in which there is "just cause" for not cooperating with DTA and DOR. If you have serious concerns regarding this requirement, such as the safety of your grandchild or yourself you should discuss it when you apply. Be prepared to submit a statement from a doctor, counselor or other credible source to support your concern.

6. Does the grandparents' income count in determining the amount of the grant a child receives from TAFDC?

A grandparent may apply for TAFDC benefits in caring for the child in either one of two ways:

- 1) on behalf of the grandchild alone, or
- 2) for the grandparent and the grandchild.

If the application is for the grandchild(ren) only, then the grandparents' income and assets will not be counted in determining TAFDC eligibility. If application is for both grandparent and grandchild, then the grandparents' income and assets will be counted.

7. My adult son gives me fifty dollars a month for the support of his child whom I'm raising. It is very difficult for me to make ends meet. My son is doing the best he can, I know he can't afford any more than what he is giving me now. Can I still apply for TAFDC?

Yes. If it is determined that the amount which he is giving you now is less than the TAFDC benefit, your grandchild will be eligible to receive TAFDC benefit. If it is determined that he can afford to give more support, he will be legally responsible for that amount. The Department of Revenue would be involved in such a situation. Your grandchild's parent must give child support payments to the Department of Revenue if the child is receiving TAFDC.

8. How do I get clothing and shoes for my grandchild if I do not have the money?

TAFDC provides an annual clothing allowance for eligible dependent children. Moreover, if you are a DSS foster parent, you will receive a quarterly clothing allowance, at rates established by the Department of Social Services based upon the age of the child. 110 CMR 7.130(2).

9. Can I get help with moving costs?

Subject to available funding, the DTA provides transportation assistance to applicants or recipients of TAFDC who have asked for help moving outside the Commonwealth. Transportation assistance is provided through agencies under contract with the Department of Transitional Assistance. Transportation assistance is limited to personal transportation for the family or the individual. You are responsible for all other moving expenses (i.e., goods or furnishings, or costs for luggage or baggage). 106 CMR 705.800, et seq.

10. How long will it take for my application for TAFDC to be processed?

If all of the necessary paperwork is completed, your signed and completed application will be processed within thirty days from the date it is received by DTA. (M.G.L. c.118, § 2). You have a right to receive an official written notice from the DTA when a decision is made on your application and each time there is a change on the case. 106 CMR 702.500

11. If my application for TAFDC is denied, do I have the right to appeal?

Yes. You have the right to file an appeal within a certain period if you disagree with any action taken on your case. You will find appeal instructions on the notices you receive. If you do not receive an official notice and an action is taken on your case, contact your local Department of Transitional Assistance office to obtain the appeal form and instructions. Additionally, if your TAFDC application is denied, you and your grandchild may be eligible for Medicaid, and you may still be eligible and file for Emergency Aid to the Elderly, Disabled and Children (EAEDC), and Food Stamps. See 106 CMR 705.000, et seq. (related benefits)

12. Am I subject to the time limits and the work limits of TAFDC?

Again, this will depend on whether you are receiving benefits for yourself and your grandchildren or only for your grandchildren. If you are receiving benefits for yourself, you may be subject to the time limit and work requirement rules. There are exceptions based on age and disability that may exempt you even if you are receiving benefits for yourself.

13. I am raising my son's daughter. I have been told that I cannot get TAFDC for my granddaughter because my son's name is not on her birth certificate. Is this correct?

No, the fact that your son's name is not on your granddaughter's birth certificate is not a barrier to your receiving TAFDC for her; however, it will make it more difficult to prove that you are eligible to get benefits for your granddaughter. To get the TAFDC for a grandchild, you must prove that you are related to your grandchild. If your son's name is not on your grandchild's birth certificate, you may provide alternative forms of verification such as school records, family bible, passport, hospital birth records, etc. 106 CMR 203.585 (B), 203.570 (B) DTA should accept court papers that show the relationship; therefore one way around this problem is to get appointed as your grandchild's legal guardian.

14. I tried to get TAFDC for my grandchildren, but was told that their mother is already getting TAFDC benefits for them. What should I do?

To get TAFDC for a child, you must prove that the child is living with you. Therefore, if you can show that the children are living with you, you should be able to get the benefits to come to you instead of the children's mother. One way to prove where the child is living is to get a letter from the child's mother or the child's school. Ask your worker about other acceptable verification. DTA may not prevent you from applying for benefits even if the mother's case is open.

15. Do I need to have legal guardianship in order to get TAFDC for my grandchild?

If the child's parent was subject to the 24-month time limit and the case was closed due to the 24-month time limit, then the grandparent may need legal custody or guardianship. If the child's parent was not subject to the 24-month time limit or the 24-month time limit has not expired, then legal custody or guardianship is not required. You need to prove that the child lives with you, that you are related to the child, and that the child lacks the support of a parent. Getting legal guardianship of the child may be helpful in proving these things.

16. Where do I apply for TAFDC?

You can apply for TAFDC at a Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) office in your area. Call your local DTA office or 1-800-249-2007.

17. How can I make the application process as easy as possible?

- Call ahead and ask what documents and information you should bring with you.

- Fill out an application even if you don't have all the information needed to complete the application. This is very important because your application date establishes the date that you will become eligible for benefits. Even if it takes an additional six weeks for you to complete the application process and start getting benefits, you may be paid back to the date of your application. Everyone has the right to fill out an application, even if it is unlikely that you will qualify or if your application will be incomplete.
- Get names and phone numbers - - Department of Transitional Assistance is a large agency and the person who does your intake probably will not be the same person that is assigned as the caseworker on your case. For your own records, you should get the name and phone number of each person you speak with. That way if there is any confusion regarding your application, you can help the Department retrace its steps and resolve the problem quickly.

18. Are there other benefits I can apply for at the same time that I apply for TAFDC?

If TAFDC is approved, there is automatic approval for MassHealth. Food stamp benefits may be approved as part of the TAFDC application if the grandparent is requesting TAFDC for him or herself. Otherwise, a separate application may be completed for food stamp benefits. You may also apply for Emergency Assistance benefits.

19. What is EAEDC?

EAEDC, which stands for Emergency Aid to the Elderly, Disabled, and Children is another financial benefit program for which you do not need to be related to the children in your care. You need to go to a DTA office to apply for these benefits.

20. What are food stamp benefits and who is eligible to receive them?

The Food Stamp Program provides assistance to low income individuals and households to purchase food. The benefits are issued monthly, and the amount is based on income and expenses of the household. In addition, many households in which each person receives public assistance benefits are considered automatically eligible for food stamp benefits. Please note, the following sources of income are counted for eligibility: a job, child support payments, unemployment benefits, Social Security, and public assistance. The Food Stamp Program has complex rules and you should talk with a Food Stamp worker if you want additional information.

21. Will my income be counted if I apply for food stamp benefits for my grandchild(ren)?

Yes. Unlike the TAFDC program, the Food Stamp Program will generally consider your income and assets and the income and assets of every other person in the child's household if the members purchase food and prepare meals together.

SOCIAL SECURITY

22. How and when do I get a Social Security card for my grandchild?

You may apply for a Social Security card at any local Social Security office. Everyone is required to have a Social Security number, so applications are generally made on the child's behalf. Proof of identification showing name, age, date of birth, proof of citizenship or immigrant status of the child must be submitted with the application. The individual filing the application may also be asked to show proof of his or her identity. In some instances, applications may also be made by mail. It generally takes two to three weeks to process the applications.

Some examples of acceptable forms of identification viewed by the Social Security Administration may include:

- 1) Driver's license;
- 2) Clinic, doctor, or hospital records;
- 3) U.S. government or state employee ID card;
- 4) Passport;
- 5) School ID card, record or report card;
- 6) Marriage or divorce record;
- 7) Health Insurance Card;
- 8) Military records;
- 9) Adoption records;
- 10) Court order of name change;
- 11) Church membership or confirmation record (if not used as evidence of age)
- 12) Insurance policy.

The Social Security office will NOT accept a birth certificate or hospital record as proof of your identity. It will accept other documents if they have enough information to identify you. Remember, the Social Security office must see original documents or copies certified by the county clerk or other official who keeps the record. Otherwise, call your local Social Security office

SUPPLEMENTAL SECURITY INCOME (SSI) (M.G.L c.118, I' 1-7A)

23. Is my grandchild eligible for SSI?

Eligibility for SSI is based on age, blindness, or disability, either as an adult or a child, and the recipient's living arrangements. The parents' income and resources will be used to determine the child's eligibility for SSI. For example, if his/her parents are financially ineligible s/he would also be, unless the parent receives public assistance. However, once a child attains age 18, marries, is no longer a student, or becomes a head of household, their parents' income and resources will not be used to determine his eligibility.

But if the child continues to live at home or otherwise receives support, benefits may be reduced if s/he does not pay a fair share of the household expenses. The parents should report whether the child pays room and board. If the parents fail to make such report or if the child does not pay a fair share, then parental assistance is assessed a value and is counted as "in-kind" support and maintenance.

If a child under age 18 is not living with his or her parents, then the parents' income and resources will not be used to determine the child's eligibility for SSI if the child resides in a private medical institution or

in a foster home. It is possible that SSI benefits could be reduced if the child receives support and maintenance or in-kind income from the parents or from some other source (e.g., a trust established for the child's benefit by his or her grandparents).

Moreover, benefits are reduced for any recipient (child) who does not have an independent living arrangement and is not institutionalized, but lives in the household of another without paying a pro rata share of household expenses. M.G.L c.118A, §1-7A.

24. What is Supplemental Security Disability Income (SSDI)?

SSDI is a program run by the Social Security Administration that provides a monthly cash benefit to disabled workers and/or to family members of disabled or deceased workers. The benefit is based on the amount of time worked and the amount of money earned.

25. Is my grandchild eligible for these benefits?

If either parent of your grandchild is deceased or disabled and that parent had a work history, your grandchild may be entitled to benefits. If you think your child may be eligible, you should call the Social Security Administration.

HEALTH INSURANCE

26. Can my grandchild be covered under my health insurance?

Generally yes, but it really depends on your carrier and the type of policy purchased. Many times an insurance carrier has already provided you with a separate medical insurance card for the dependent child. A hospital may bill you after the treatment for any services rendered should your insurance not cover the child being admitted for treatment. However, any contract which provides coverage, between subscriber and corporation under an individual or group hospital plan which is delivered or renewed in Massachusetts shall include as insured members:

- 1) adoptive children from the date of filing the petition;
- 2) foster children for whom the foster parent receives payments; and
- 3) children who have been placed by a licensed placement agency for purposes of adoption.

Such insurance will provide benefits for expenses arising from illness, injury, congenital malformation, or premature birth. Any policy as described will also provide for a child's preventive and primary care services.

Health insurers require some grandparents who have an individual policy with them to name the dependent child(ren) on their policy. For a grandparent to have the child(ren) covered under a group policy the grandparent must submit all the applicable paperwork. As long as the child's name was

submitted under the policy and the necessary paperwork is submitted the child will be covered until the age of 19.

27. If the child does not qualify for MassHealth, are there other types of health insurance for which s/he might qualify?

There are different types of health programs that provide services for free or reduced cost such as Children's Medical Security Plan (CMSP). See the sections on Health Information and the section on Additional Resources.

28. I am on MassHealth. Are my grandchildren entitled to MassHealth benefits?

They may be eligible for MassHealth provided they meet income guidelines and are under age 19. If age 19 or over, they would have to meet the various eligibility criteria for adults.

29. How do I get health insurance for my grandchild?

You may be able to get health insurance for your grandchild through MassHealth, the Children's Medical Security Plan (CMSP), or your own health plan. You should call MassHealth at 1-800-841-2900 for information.

30. Is my grandchild eligible for health care coverage through the State?

Any child who is eligible for either SSI or TAFDC is also eligible for MassHealth. Children who are eligible for this reason are considered "categorically eligible". In addition, some children who have incomes above the "categorically needy" limits may still qualify as "medically needy".

31. What is CMSP?

The Children's Medical Security Plan (CMSP) is a health insurance program for children who are not eligible for MassHealth, and still do not have private health insurance. The CMSP program is not as extensive as MassHealth, so you should try to get your grandchild on MassHealth first.

32. Where do I apply for MassHealth or CMSP?

Where you apply depends on whether or not you plan to apply for TAFDC for your grandchild as well. If you plan to apply for TAFDC, then the TAFDC application includes MassHealth. If you are not applying for TAFDC benefits, then you should call MassHealth at 1-800-841-2900, TTY 800-497-4548 or the Children's Medical Security Plan application phone number at 1-800-909-2677.

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE (M.G.L. c.1511A)

33. If I have to quit my job in order to care for my grandchild, will I be eligible for unemployment?

Unemployment insurance is temporary income for eligible workers who become unemployed through no fault of their own and who are looking for new jobs. You must also have earned at least \$2,400 during a specified period of time, set by law. To remain eligible, you must actively look for full-time job. This means that you must let the State Division of Employment and Training (DET) know if you were unable to work during any week you are claiming benefits. To show DET that you are actively seeking full-time work, you must establish a worksheet plan, maintain records of your worksheet and report this information to DET periodically as required.

You may be disqualified from receiving benefits if DET determines that you:

- 1) left your job voluntarily without good cause;
- 2) were fired from your job for deliberate misconduct or violation of a company rule;
- 3) were suspended from your job because you broke company rules or regulations;
- 4) left your job because you were convicted of a felony or misdemeanor;
- 5) are not able and available to work full time or did not look for full time work; or
- 6) are unemployed because you are participating in a work stoppage due to a labor dispute.

The grandparent supporting the grandchild cannot quit his or her job voluntarily and recover unemployment compensation without just cause. See also M.G.L c.151A, § 29B. There are exceptions, however, and you should be encouraged to apply for unemployment.

34. Will I get extra unemployment if I support a grandchild?

Yes. If you are the whole or main source of support of your grandchildren, you may be eligible for a weekly dependency allowance. The allowance cannot be more than half your benefit rate, and you must provide documentation, such as a birth certificate for each child claimed. Your dependent child(ren) must be either under 18; under 24 and attending an educational institution full-time; or any age, but unable to earn wages due to mental or physical incapacity. M.G.L c.151A. §29B

B. CUSTODY OF CHILDREN

35. My grandchild lives with me, the Department of Social Services is not involved, and I have never been to court. What are my legal rights with respect to my grandchild?

In this situation, you have no custodial rights to your grandchild. In other words, if the child's parent(s) were to come back, you would have no legal right to refuse to give the child to the parent(s).

36. What can I do to gain custodial rights with respect to my grandchild?

If your grandchild is in custody of DSS, you should contact them regarding your interest in caring for the child. If DSS is not involved, you gain custody through the court.

37. How does DSS become involved?

DSS usually becomes involved with children after someone has filed a 51A report. This is a report that says that a child may be suffering from abuse or neglect or is drug dependent at birth. If DSS believes the child is being abused or neglected and that removal of the child from his or her parents is necessary, they will go to court and ask that legal custody of the child be placed with DSS. This court action is called a Care and Protection Proceeding.

38. How do I get visitation rights?

You may petition your local county probate court for visitation rights. M.G.L. c.119, §35, 39D. Contact the clerk of the local county probate court for information as to the commencement of a guardianship proceeding. It is advisable that you also contact a lawyer for legal representation.

39. Can I get custody of my grandchild without the consent of the child's parents?

Yes. A court may deprive unfit parents of custody of their minor child upon a persuasive showing that returning the child to the parents would create a substantial risk or likelihood of serious harm to the child. M.G.L c.201, §5.

40. Do I have the legal responsibility to care for my grandchild if the parents are unable to do so?

No. It is up to the state to appoint custody to a suitable individual. The probate court has the power to make such an appointment. While it may be a grandparent's desire to become responsible for the child, they are not required as a matter of law.

41. DSS called and said that if I don't take the children, they are going into foster care. What should I do?

Under these circumstances, you have three options: you can go to probate court and seek guardianship of the children, you can tell DSS that you would like to be the children's foster parents, or you can say that you are not interested or not able to be your grandchild's primary caregiver at this time. Before you make a decision, you should consider the following factors.

If you become the grandchildren's legal guardian with custody, DSS' involvement with your family is likely to be very limited or it may not be involved at all. Therefore, you would have greater control. On the other hand, it is only when DSS has legal custody that you are entitled to foster care payment, which provides more money than TAFDC. In addition, it is very difficult to get services through DSS if your grandchild is not in DSS' legal custody.

42. Can I be sure that if DSS has legal custody, the children can live with me?

No, however if DSS has gone to court and obtained custody, you should call DSS immediately and ask that the children be placed with you as their foster parent.

43. What happens in regard to visitation when the grandchild has been adopted by the other set of grandparents?

No visitation rights will be granted if the minor child has been adopted by a person other than a stepparent of such child. Furthermore, upon adoption of the child, any previously granted visitation rights will be terminated without any further action of the court. M.G.L. c.119, § 39D. The court will look at what is in the best interest of the child. The custodial grandparents may also have discretion in determining whether visitation is appropriate.

GUARDIANSHIP

44. In my case, DSS wanted me to adopt the children and the children's parents agreed, but I'm not sure I'm comfortable adopting my own grandchildren. Are there any other options?

An alternative to adoption is a permanent guardianship. If DSS was involved you may be entitled to Subsidized Guardianship benefits. This would allow you to continue to receive the same amount you were receiving as foster care payments after the court has made you the children's guardian. If you are interested in this, you should discuss this option with a DSS Social Worker.

45. What is the difference between adoption and permanent guardianship?

When a child is adopted, the birth parents lose any and all rights to the child, unless there is an open adoption agreement negotiated between the birth parent and the adoptive parents. In contrast, under any kind of guardianship, the parents do not lose their parental rights. In effect, the rights are merely suspended and the parent(s) could ask the court to give custody of the children back to them anytime. If the parents can prove they are fit, the court must return the children. This is true even if you have permanent guardianship.

46. In my case, DSS was not involved, but rather I went over to my daughter's house and brought the children home with me because my daughter had a serious drug and alcohol problem and could not take care of her children. Now what should I do?

If DSS is not involved and the children are with you, you should probably go to court and seek to become the children's guardian. To do this, you should go to the probate court of the county where the children are living. The court will give you the necessary forms. Many grandparents petition for guardianship without the help of a lawyer; however, if you would like some assistance you should call the court house ahead of time and ask when the "lawyer of the day" will be in the probate court or you should contact one of the legal services programs listed in the back of this guide.

47. I want to become my grandchild's legal guardian, but I cannot afford the costs and court fees. What should I do?

If you cannot afford the costs and fees, there are forms you can fill out asking the court to waive those costs and fees. These forms are called the "affidavit of indigency" and the "waiver of fees form." The granting of such a waiver is left to the court's discretion. Moreover, you are not entitled to a court appointed attorney, so you can either represent yourself (pro se), or obtain legal assistance from a legal services office in your area, or obtain private counsel.

48. What rights do I have as a guardian?

This depends on the type of guardianship, but generally every legal guardian has the right to make decisions relative to the child's health or for the protection of the child's assets.

49. If I am not the child's legal guardian, can I give permission for necessary medical procedures?

It depends on the situation. Parental consent is not required where a child must have immediate care to save his/her life or to prevent a serious risk to his/her health. Emergency care may be given where indicated and where delay would cause either risk to the child's health or unnecessary prolongation of pain or discomfort. The consent is said to be implied since any reasonable parent would consent to treatment in an emergency.

50. What are my responsibilities as the children's guardian?

You are responsible for their physical well being as well as ensuring that any money or resources they have are spent on their behalf. You will be able to make all decisions regarding their education or medical needs or other such matters.

51. I understand that it can take some time to be appointed permanent guardian of my grandchild. Is there anything I can do to get custody in the meantime?

If there is an immediate need for you to become the child's legal guardian, you should ask the court to appoint you as a temporary guardian. This lasts for only 90 days and after that you will need to go back to court to become their permanent guardian.

52. What if there is an emergency and I need to get custody of my grandchildren immediately?

If you believe that your grandchildren are in need of a guardian immediately, you can petition for temporary guardianship with custody and also request an emergency hearing on the temporary guardianship that same day. In order to get an emergency hearing, you will need to fill out an affidavit explaining why you believe the situation requires immediate action.

53. My daughter died. Do her children become mine automatically?

No. You do not have an automatic right to custody even if both parents are deceased. This is true even if either parent stated that you were the guardian of choice in his or her will. You will still need to petition to be appointed legal guardian with custody of the children or to adopt the children in order to gain custodial rights to the children.

54. If my daughter stated in her will that she wanted me to care for her children will I automatically be given custody of my grandchildren?

No. A parent's stated preference regarding who should care for his/her children in the event of the death of the parent may be used as evidence to show the parent's intention. However, the court is not bound by the terms of the will.

55. My daughter is dying and would like to ensure that her children come live with me after her death. Is there anything we can do?

Yes. In 1996, Massachusetts created a new law called the "Standby Guardianship" statute. Under this law, a parent or legal guardian can petition to have the court approve, in advance, a person to take over the caring for the child in the event that the parent or legal guardian becomes incapacitated or dies. If approved, the "standby guardian" would automatically become the children's guardian if and when the parent or original guardian becomes incapacitated or dies. Please note, standby guardianships are only valid for three months. After that time, the new guardian will have to petition for permanent guardianship.

56. What do I do if the children's parents want to see them after the court has made me their guardian?

When the court appoints you as the children's guardian, the judge may include in the order provisions regarding the visitation by the parents. If this is the case, you must follow the court's order. If the judge has ordered visitation and things change later so that you think visitation is no longer good for the children, you should return to court to seek a change in the order. If there is no court order regarding visitation, then you may decide whether or not and when to allow the parents to visit. M.G.L.119. 15.

57. A judge made me guardian of my grandchildren several years ago but now their mother is saying she wants them back. What will happen?

As long as the judge made you the permanent guardian, the mother has to go back to court in order to try to get the children back. She will have to ask the court to terminate the guardianship and place the children with her. The standard the court will use in making its decision is whether the party petitioning for the removal of the guardian has demonstrated “a substantial and material change of circumstances and if the revocation is in the child’s best interest.” G.L. c. 201 § 5. If you think either of the parents will challenge your guardianship, you should keep a log indicating their contact with the children and the nature of their involvement in the children’s lives. You should also seek the help of a therapist or other professional who can testify as to what is in the child’s best interest.

58. I am caring for my grandchild and their father shows up at the house and is very violent and has threatened the children and me. What should I do?

You will probably be able to seek a restraining order under chapter 209A of the Massachusetts General Laws. The restraining order will prohibit the father from abusing or threatening to abuse you or the children. It can also order that the father stay away from your home. To get a restraining order you need to go to the probate court of the county in which you and your grandchild reside. If the probate court decides that you are not able to get a restraining order under **chapter** 209A, they will help you figure out what the next steps are.

59. What is a termination of guardianship hearing?

A termination of guardianship hearing is a court proceeding to determine whether the guardianship should be ended. Typically a guardianship ends when a ward (here, the grandchild) dies or is declared to have regained competency. A guardian's duties terminate on resignation, death (of the guardian or ward), or removal by a court. However, a court will not accept a guardian's resignation as effective unless it is satisfied that the best interest of the child would be served. Courts also remove guardians who become incapacitated, who fail to carry out their duties, or who violate their fiduciary obligations.

DEALING WITH CHILDREN WITH BEHAVIORIAL PROBLEMS

60. I am having problems with my teenage grandson; I do not want to get involved with DSS or the courts. Is there any program or assistance to help me and him deal with his behavior?

There are public and private organizations that you might want to contact depending on the circumstance of his behavior. You could speak with your health care provider for recommendations to local counseling agencies. You might want to look into youth programs offered through the Boy’s Club,

YMCA and faith based organizations as well as The Big Brother and Big Sister Association and other mentoring programs. You may want to arrange an informal meeting with the CHINS (Children in Need of Services) Department, of the local Juvenile Court to discuss the situation and your options.

CHILD ABUSE AND PLACEMENT OF A CHILD

Department of Social Services

M.G.L c.18B, §§ 1-22: Duties & Responsibilities of the DSS.

M.G.L c.112, § 135B: Responsibilities of Social Workers.

M.G.L c.119, §§ 1- 51a: Care and Protection of Children.

M.G.L c.209A, §§ 1- 9: Protective Orders.

M.G.L. c.210, §§ 1- 11A: Parental Rights and Adoption.

61. Who makes the final decision where the child will be placed -- is it the judge or DSS?

Placement of children who are in the hands of DSS will be determined at the discretion of DSS and not the court. Massachusetts law gives DSS as custodian the authority to determine where the child should live. M.G.L c.119, §§ 21, 23, 32 and 33. There is no statutory provision granting the court the power to make specific placement decisions. The Supreme Judicial Court has noted: "when [DSS] is granted permanent custody of a child, it has virtually free rein to place that child in a foster home of its choosing. This discretion is subject only to a petition for review which cannot be filed more than once every six months."

62. When a parent is unable to care for a child, is the immediate family always considered first (as permanent caretakers)?

Blood relatives are almost always considered first as a permanent caretaker when the parents are unable to care for the child. 110 CMR 7.101 (2). When the child is removed from his/her family, DSS will consider all factors relevant to the child's physical, mental, and moral health. M.G.L. c.119, 33. Children in the care or custody of DSS will be placed in private families; or if the child is found to be in need of special care, treatment or education may, if it is in the best interest of the child, be placed in a public or private institution or school. M.G.L. c.119 §32.

Additionally, if you (as a relative) wish to be a foster parent, then you must participate in a home study and a background check. You will be approved only for a specific child.

63. What should I do if I think it is unsafe to return the child to his/her parents?

You should make a report to DSS Area offices if you believe that a child is suffering serious physical or emotional injury as a result of abuse or neglect by a caretaker. 110 CMR 4.20. You should consider consulting the local Police Department, a lawyer, or if applicable your local legal services agency, depending on the circumstances.

64. I worry that my granddaughter is being physically abused by her mother. What should I do?

You should call the DSS area office closest to where the child lives. To find your local office you may check your local phone directory, or call 617-748-2000, or see the DSS web page at www.state.ma.us/dss/. You should report to them that you believe that your grandchild is being abused. DSS will then investigate the matter, and if they agree with you, they will open a case and provide services for your granddaughter and her mother to make sure there is no further abuse. If they feel it would be unsafe to leave the child with her mother, they will go to court to try to get legal custody of the child. There are no guarantees that DSS will automatically place the child with you.

65. What legal rights do I have as a grandparent if I believe my grandchild is being abused and neglected and I want to care for her?

As a grandparent you may report the abuse or neglect to DSS. You may seek to be awarded custody as either a guardian or an adoptive parent. A custody proceeding begins in probate court. DSS is authorized to locate substitute care should the child's parents become unable to provide the necessary care and protection to insure that the normal physical, mental, spiritual, moral development and health needs of the child are met. A grandparent could also file a care and protection under G.L.C. 11g in the Juvenile Court.

66. What options do I have if I feel that it is best to keep the parent away from his or her child?

First, you could petition the probate court to be appointed as a temporary guardian, thus acquiring legal custody over the child. Simultaneously you could also file for a temporary restraining order against the parents. Second, you could notify DSS if you believe that the child is being abused. Third, you could seek to obtain permanent legal custody and have the parent's rights terminated. If there is proof of parental neglect, unfitness, or abandonment, it would be necessary for the state to commence a proceeding to terminate the parental rights involuntarily. Thereafter, the court decides who will have custody of the child, including whether making you the custodial parent would be in the best interest of the child. M.G.L.c.209A 3, M.G.L.c.119 § 24, 26. M.G. L. c. 201 § 5, M.G.L. c. 210 § 3.

Please note that when determining whether a parent is unfit, courts tend to focus on the effect parental conduct has or is likely to have on the child rather than on the social desirability of such conduct. Therefore, immorality or sexual deviation does not automatically constitute unfitness of a parent. In making a finding of unfitness, courts normally must (a) examine the relationship (or lack thereof) which has existed between parent and child and (b) determine what the parent-child relationship is likely to be in the future. M.G.L.c.209A, 3, M.G.L.c.119 24.

67. What is an emergency shelter for children?

An emergency shelter is a temporary shelter care facility program or a group care facility licensed, under M.G.L. c.28A, which may for a 72 hour period provide temporary shelter to a child under 18, without parental consent, provided that the child's welfare would be endangered if such shelter were not immediately provided. At the expiration of the 72 hour period, the facility must (1) secure the consent

of the parent or guardian to continue custody and care; (2) refer the child to the DSS for custody; or (3) refuse to provide continued care and custody to the child. M.G.L. c.119 §23, 110 CMR 7.090.

PARENTAL RIGHTS (M.G.L. c.210, §1 - 11A), (M.G.L. c.210, §5)

68. If parental rights have been terminated, do I have any rights as the grandparent?

No. Upon termination of parental rights, generally all legal relationships between parent and child are ended, as well as between the child and the grandparents. Adoption of Helen, 429 Mass 856 (1999) M.G.L. c. 210, § 6. When parental rights are terminated, the parent no longer has any right to care for or to visit the child. Moreover, unless a grandparent is granted the right to adopt the child when the parent's rights are terminated, these extended familial ties are also legally ended. The exception to this is when an open adoption is negotiated.

69. How are the rights of the grandparent affected when the parent's legal rights are terminated?

See question above.

70. What rights do I have concerning my grandchild if my own child is deceased?

You have a right to seek custody of the grandchild via adoption, or appointment as a foster parent, or legal guardian.

ADOPTION (M.G.L. c.210, § 1- 11A) (110 CMR 7.200 - 7.215)

71. I have had the children for eight years and it is clear that their parents will never be able to care for them. Is it possible for me to adopt the children?

Yes. In order for you to adopt the children, a probate court must allow the adoption. This is a fairly easy procedure if both parents consent to the adoption. If one or both of the parents do not consent to the adoption, a Petition to Dispense with Parental Consent must be filed in the adoption proceeding. M.G.L.c. 210 § 3. The court will then have to decide whether it is in the child's best interest to terminate the parent's rights completely.

If DSS is involved in the case, you can ask them to pursue the adoption for you. If DSS was never involved, you will definitely need a lawyer. You may need a home study which can be conducted by either DSS or a licensed private agency.

71a. A friend told me I should try to negotiate an "open adoption". What does this mean?

Recently the law was changed to allow the parties to negotiate an "open adoption". This means that you as the grandparents will become the child's legal parents, but one or both of the birth parents will play some defined role in the child's life. This could mean visits or phone conversation or other

arrangements. A judge must approve any agreement negotiated by the adoptive parents and the birth parents. G.L. c. 210 Sections 6C, 6D.

71b. If we decide to adopt my grandchildren but we think that an open adoption is a good idea, are there any programs that can help us?

There are now programs in the Probate and Juvenile Court that provide mediation services to prospective adoptive parents and birth parents. The goal of these services is to assist the parties in identifying what plan makes the most sense for the child.

72. If I adopt my grandchild can I continue to get TAFDC for the child?

This will depend on your income. Once you adopt your grandchild, your income will be included in determining whether or not the child is eligible for benefits. You may also be subject to time limits and work requirements.

73. Is there any other financial assistance I can get if I adopt my grandchild?

If you are planning on adopting the children, they may be entitled to benefits under the Adoption Assistance Program, but only if the children were in the custody of DSS. 110 CMR 7.209. This would provide monthly payments in the same amount as foster care payments. If you are interested in this possibility, you should discuss this with DSS.

74. If I decide to adopt my grandchild, how will I get assistance with legal fees?

Generally court fees and legal fees must be paid for in any court proceeding. However, if you are applying for adoption and cannot afford to pay for the necessary fees, you can apply for a waiver of court fees and costs. Such waiver is left to the court's discretion. Moreover, you are not entitled to a court appointed attorney, so you can either represent yourself (pro se) or obtain legal assistance from the legal services office in your area. It is always advisable to consult an attorney in these matters.

75. If I adopt my grandchildren, what will happen to their relationship with their parents or the other grandparents?

If you adopt your grandchildren, you will have all the rights and responsibilities of any other parent. The rights of the children's parents are terminated and they therefore have no legal right to maintain contact with the child, unless you negotiate an open adoption (See Question 71a). You have no obligation to give the other set of grandparents any visits with the children. If you believe it is good for the children to maintain contact with their parents or their other grandparents, you may voluntarily agree to a visitation schedule, but you are not obligated to do so, unless the court's order of adoption specified that visitation was to take place.

M.G.L.c.210. 6.

76. What does "permanency planning" mean?

Permanency planning is a clinical child welfare term which describes a process used by the probate court, Juvenile Court, or DSS (internally) to assess the child's needs as well as where the child should be permanently placed.

77. Do I register my grandchild in the school district where I live or in the school district previously attended by the child?

Every person has a right to attend the public schools of the town where s/he actually resides. The Department of Education states that children who actually live in a town, whether with their natural parents, a grandparent or other relatives, by themselves, in a foster or group home or in virtually any other living situation are legally entitled to attend the town's public schools. The statute avoids technical questions of custody, guardianship and domicile, and focuses on where the child actually lives. M.G.L. c.76, §5.

CHILD CARE

78. Where and how do I go about finding child care for my grandchild while I work?

You may contact the Office of Child Care Services (OCCS) for a statewide list of licensed/certified day care providers in your area. OCCS also provides qualified guardians and/or children with a variety of subsidies or other forms of financial assistance to help with the costs of child care. You may also contact your local child care Resource and Referral agency who can assist with both finding child care and subsidy information. The toll free number is 1-800-345-0131.

FOSTER CARE (M.G.L. c.119, §21-33) (110 CMR 7.100 - 7.130)

79. My grandchildren are in DSS custody. How is the final decision made about where they live?

Typically, DSS will make a decision about whether or not the children can ever return to their parent(s) and, if not, where the children should go. A court must approve the decision and, if the parent(s) does not agree with DSS' decision, he/she will have the opportunity to argue that the children should be reunited with the parent. Your grandchildren will have a lawyer and sometimes it is helpful to discuss the case with that lawyer.

Neither foster parents nor grandparents are automatically parties in this process. However, if you are concerned about the decisions being made and would like the court to hear your position, you can move to intervene, which would make you a party. Intervening is very difficult to do and requires legal assistance.

80. Will I be considered above other foster parents?

Under DSS regulations, DSS is supposed to first try to place the children with relatives, before placing the children with unrelated foster parents. 110 CMR 7.101(2) You should try to get a lawyer to assist you with this process.

81. What is a Homestudy?

Before DSS can officially approve you as a foster parent, it must make sure you and your home are safe and appropriate (for example, is your home large enough, do you have lead paint, has anyone in your home been convicted of a serious crime, etc.).

82. If I become a foster parent to my grandchild, what sort of financial assistance will I receive?

As a foster parent, you are reimbursed for taking a youngster into your home. This includes a monthly check for daily expenses (the amount is based on the age of the child), a quarterly clothing allowance, and coverage of the child's dental and medical expenses. 110 CMR 7.130. Some foster parents are paid for specialized services.

83. Do non-related foster care parents receive more (or less) benefits than those who are grandparents or other relations?

No. Familial relationships bear no relevance to the amount of benefits a non-related foster parent would receive. As the grandparent you would receive the same amount as any foster parent regardless of your relationship to the child.

84. DSS placed my grandchild with me several months ago, but I'm still not receiving any financial support. What can I do?

You should contact your grandchild's social worker and let him/her know. DSS will pay you from the day that DSS places the grandchild in your home. You can also call the DSS Payment Assistance Line (PAL) at 1-800-632-8218. You can apply for TAFDC benefits for your grandchild while you await completion of the home study. However, if you do this, the DSS cannot also provide foster care payments. 110 CMR 7.109.

85. If DSS has legal custody and the children live with me, who makes decisions regarding the children's medical and education needs?

As long as DSS has legal custody, they have the responsibility to make decisions for the children. However, DSS usually delegates routine medical responsibilities and decisions to the foster parent. So, you are probably responsible for taking your grandchild to regular doctor's visits. However, if you think a child needs a particular type of medical procedure, you will need to obtain DSS's permission.

86. I am my grandchildren's foster parent and the children's mother wants to visit the children. May I allow the visits?

If your grandchild is in DSS custody, DSS will determine whether or not visits between the children and their parents is appropriate and under what circumstances. It is important that you follow whatever DSS decides. If you or the children's parents do not agree with the visitation, you should discuss it with DSS or have the children's parents ask their attorneys what to do.

87. If the child's parent is in prison, must I bring the child to visit him/her?

No. You are not REQUIRED to bring the child to visit his or her incarcerated parent unless it is part of a court order. Visitation rights for parents without custody will be given to the extent that the best interest of the child will be served, although the influence of the noncustodial parent is preemptively beneficial. The Uniform Marriage and Divorce Act § 401 provides that the noncustodial parent is entitled to reasonable visitation rights "unless the court finds, after a hearing, that visitation would seriously endanger the child's physical, mental, moral or emotional health." The law is applicable to grandparents who are also the custodial parents. M.G.L. c.119, §23A.

LEGAL ASSISTANCE AND INFORMATION

The following is a list of legal resources you may want to contact for assistance and information.

Boston College Legal Assistance Bureau: (781) 893-4793; TTY: (781) 736-9006. Area Served: Newton, Waltham, and Watertown. Elder Project: serves persons over 60 living in the general area served above and Belmont, Brookline, Needham, Wellesley, Weston.

New Center for Legal Advocacy, Inc.: (1-800-244-9023) Area Served: Abington, Acushnet, Attleboro, Avon, Berkeley, Bridgewater, Brockton, Dighton, East Bridgewater, Easton, Fairhaven, Fall River, Freetown, Gosnold, Hanover, Mattapoisett, Mansfield, New Bedford, North Attleboro, Norton, Raynham, Rehoboth, Rockland, Seekonk, Somerset, Stoughton, Swansea, Taunton, West Bridgewater, Westport, and Whitman

Southeastern Massachusetts Legal Assistance Corporation: Senior Law Project
Fall River 1-800-287-3777, Brockton 1-800-244-8393, New Bedford 1-800-429-9721
Area Served: Carver, Duxbury, Hanson, Halifax, Kingston, Lakeville, Marion, Marshfield, Middleborough, North Carver, Pembroke, Plympton, Plymouth, Rochester, Wareham

Cambridge and Somerville Legal Services: (617) 603-2700. Area Served: Arlington, Belmont, Cambridge, Somerville, Winchester, and Woburn. Elder Project: General area served above and Acton, Bedford, Boxborough, Burlington, Carlisle, Concord, Harvard, Lexington, Lincoln, Littleton, Maynard, Stow, Wilmington. Disabilities: Area Served: Arlington, Belmont, Boxborough, Burlington, Cambridge, Harvard, Littleton, Somerville, Winchester, Woburn

Community Legal Services and Counseling Center: (617) 661-1010; Area Served: Arlington, Belmont, Boston, Brookline, Cambridge, Chelsea, Everett, Medford, Somerville, and Watertown.

Greater Boston Legal Services: (617) 371-1234; TTY: (617) 371-1228. Area Served: Boston, Braintree, Brookline, Canton, Chelsea, Cohasset, Everett, Hingham, Holbrook, Hull, Malden, Medford, Melrose, Milton, Newton, Norwell, Quincy, Randolph, Reading, North Reading, Revere, Scituate, Stoneham, Wakefield, Waltham, Watertown, Weymouth, Winthrop

Harvard Legal Aid Bureau: (617) 495-4408. Area Served: [non domestic cases] Suffolk County and the following towns in Middlesex County: Arlington, Belmont, Burlington, Cambridge, Everett, Malden, Medford, Melrose, Newton, Reading, North Reading, Somerville, Stoneham, Wakefield, Waltham, Watertown, Weston, Wilmington, Winchester, Woburn [domestic cases] All of Middlesex and Suffolk counties

Legal Advisory and Resource Center of the Boston Bar Association (LARC): (617) 742-9179; 1-800-342-5297. Area Served: Statewide.

Legal Assistance Corporation of Central Mass: In Worcester area: (508) 752-3718; 1-800-649-3718; TTY: (508) 755-3260. In Fitchburg area: (978) 345-2067; 1-800-649-3718. Area Served: All towns in Worcester County. Elder Law Project: Worcester: (508) 752-3718.

Hale & Dorr Legal Services Center (617) 522-3003. Area Served: Fenway, Hyde Park, Jamaica Plain, Roslindale, South End, W. Roxbury, parts of Dorchester, Mattapan and Roxbury.

Legal Services for Cape Cod and Islands: (508) 771-7458; 1-800-742-4107. Plymouth County: (508) 746-2777; 1-800-585-4933. Area Served: Barnstable, Bourne, Brewster, Chatham, Chilmark, Dennis, Eastham, Edgartown, Falmouth, Gay Head, Harwich, Mashpee, Nantucket, Oak Bluffs, Orleans, Provincetown, Sandwich, Tisbury, Truro, Wellfleet, West Tisbury, Yarmouth. Elder Law Project: (508) 771-7458; 1-800-742-4107.

Merrimack Valley Legal Services: Lowell: (978) 458-1465, (978) 458-7701; TTY: (978) 452-4740. Lawrence/Haverhill: (978) 687-1177; 1-800-427-2521; TTY: (978) 689-7275. Area Served: Amesbury, Andover, Billerica, Boxford, Chelmsford, Dracut, Dunstable, Georgetown, Groveland, Haverhill, Lawrence, Lowell, Merrimack, Methuen, Newbury, Newburyport, North Andover, Rowley, Salisbury, Tewksbury, Tyngsborough, Westford, West Newbury.

Middlesex County Bar Association Legal Clinic: (617) 494-4150. Area Served: All towns in Middlesex County.

Neighborhood Legal Services: 1-800-747-5056 voice and TDD (781) 599-7730; Area Served: Beverly, Beverly Farms, Danvers, Essex, Gloucester, Hamilton, South Hamilton, Ipswich, Lynn, Lynnfield, Magnolia, Manchester, Marblehead, Middleton, Nahant, Peabody, Pride's Crossing, Rockport, Salem, Saugus, Swampscott, Topsfield, Wenham.

South Middlesex Legal Services Elder Law Project: (508) 620-1830; 1-800-696-1501. Area Served: Ashland, Canton, Dedham, Dover, Foxborough, Framingham, Holliston, Hopkinton, Hudson,

Marlborough, Medfield, Millis, Natick, Norfolk, Northborough, and Norwood. Elder Law Project: Area Served: Ashland, Canton, Dedham, Dover, Foxborough, Framingham, Holliston, Hopkington, Hudson, Marlborough, Medfield, Millis, Natick, Norfolk, Northborough, Norwood, Plainville, Sharon, Sherborn, Southborough, Sudbury, Walpole, Wayland, Westborough, Wrentham, Westwood,

Volunteer Lawyers Project: (617) 423-0648; TTY: (617) 338-6790. Area Served: Boston proper, Braintree, Brookline, Canton, Chelsea, Cohasset, Everett, Hingham, Hull, Holbrook, Malden, Medford, Melrose, Milton, Newton, Norwell, Quincy, Randolph, Revere, Scituate, Stoneham, Wakefield, Weymouth, Winthrop, Wollaston, Waltham, Watertown.

Massachusetts Justice Project: 1-800-639-1209. Area Served: Berkshire, Franklin, Hampden, and Hampshire Counties

Western Mass. Legal Services:

Springfield: (413) 781-7814; 1-800-639-1109. Area Served: Agawam, East Longmeadow, Hampden, Holland, Longmeadow, Monson, Palmer, Springfield, Wales, West Springfield, and Wilbraham.

Northampton: (413) 584-4034; 1-800-639-1309. Area Served: Amherst, Blandford, Chester, Chesterfield, Cummington, Easthampton, Goshen, Granville, Hadley, Hatfield, Huntington, Middlefield, Montgomery, Northampton, Pelham, Plainfield, Russell, Southampton, Southwick, Tolland, Westfield, Westhampton, Williamsburg, Worthington.

Greenfield: (413) 774-3747; 1-800-639-1309. Area Served: Ashfield, Athol, Bernardston, Buckland, Charlemont, Colrain, Conway, Deerfield, Erving, Gill, Greenfield, Hawley, Heath, Leverett, Leyden, Monroe, Montague, New Salem, Northfield, Orange, Petersham, Phillipston, Rowe, Royalston, Shelburne, Shutesbury, Sunderland, Warwick, Wendell, Whately.

Pittsfield: (413) 499-1950; 1-800-639-1509. Area Served: Adams, Alford, Becket, Cheshire, Clarksburg, Dalton, Egremont, Florida, Great Barrington, Hancock, Hinsdale, Lanesborough, Lee, Lenox, Monterey, Mount Washington, New Ashford, New Marlborough, North Adams, Otis, Peru, Pittsfield, Richmond, Sandisfield, Savoy, Sheffield, Stockbridge, Tyringham, Washington, West Stockbridge, Williamstown, Windsor.

Holyoke: 1-800-639-1209. Area Served: Belchertown, Chicopee, Granby, Holyoke, Ludlow, South Hadley, Ware.

SPECIAL TOPICS LEGAL REPRESENTATION

Programs listed below provide representation, advice or assistance to people with special types of legal problems.

AIDS Law Project. Legal Services Center (617) 522-3003

Children's Law Center of Mass: (781) 581-1977

Consumer Hotline, Office of the Attorney General: (617) 727-8400

Disability Law Center: (617) 723-8455 or 1-800-872-9992

Ecumenical Social Action Committee (617) 524-4820 in partnership with the Massachusetts Appleseed Center has a program designed to help elderly borrowers facing foreclosure on loans from substandard lenders that have high interest rates and excessive fees..

Massachusetts Appleseed Center: (617) 861-5069 At the time of printing the Center is piloting a legal assistance program for low income kinship caregivers seeking uncontested guardianship in Family and Probate Court.

Boston Bar Association: (617-742-0625 provides free or reduced fee legal assistance to pre-adoptive parents, and also assists guardians for children wishing to maintain a permanent guardianship.

Child Support Consumer Service Bureau (Massachusetts Department of Revenue) 1-800-332-2733.

The New Center for Legal Advocacy: New Bedford (508) 996-8576.

LAWYER REFERENCE SERVICES

The Lawyer Reference Services (LRS) refers paying clients to lawyers for any kind of case -- including, but not limited to, contingency fee cases. Most LRS attorneys charge an initial half-hour consultation fee of \$25. Lawyers will then negotiate fees with clients who retain them after the consultation. Some LRS lawyers will charge lower fees to clients who meet the bar associations' financial guidelines.

Boston Bar Association Lawyer Reference Service: (617) 742-0625. Reduced fee panel.

Mass. Bar Association Lawyer Referral Service: 1-800-392-6164. Reduced fee panel.

Middlesex Bar Association: (617) 494-4150. Regular fee referral service.



Erica, age 4
Drawing from a 1998 Wellness Day Activity
"Erica and her grandmother"

VI. HEALTH INFORMATION

Government Health Care Programs

There are a number of different health plans and programs that are administered through the state and federal governments. Below is a brief summary of types of insurance/programs and places to contact for further information.

CenterCare

Provides primary and preventative health care services free of charge to low-income uninsured individuals through some Community Health Centers.

Contact: Department of Public Health (617) 624-6060 for information.

Children's Medical Security Plan

Administered by the Department of Public Health, provides access to preventive and primary care services for children residing in Massachusetts who are under age 19, do not have health insurance, and are ineligible for MassHealth. The benefit package includes coverage for well-child visits, immunizations, laboratory services, durable medical equipment, sick visits, comprehensive dental benefits, limited mental health, pharmacy and emergency care benefit. The program is free for children in families with incomes at or under 200% of poverty; families between 201%-400% of poverty are charged a reduced premium rate of \$10.50 per child per month up to maximum of \$31.50 and families with incomes over 400% of poverty are charged the full premium of \$52.50 per child per month. Co-payments are \$1, \$3, and \$5, depending on family size and income.

Contact: For information and assistance with enrollment, please call
1-800-909-2677.

COBRA

Federal program which mandates that an individual remain eligible for continued group health insurance in certain situations. The individual pays the entire premium.

Eligible individuals include those who's past employers met the insurance guidelines and who fall into these categories:

- worker was laid off or voluntarily terminated employment;
- employee had reduction of work hours;
- there was a death of the insured spouse;
- the individual became eligible for Medicare;
- a dependent child ceased to be a dependent.

Contact: Department of Labor Pension and Welfare Benefits office at (617) 565-9600

CommonHealth

Provides full or supplemental health care benefits to disabled children, working disabled adults, and non-working disabled adults above 133% of poverty level. Individuals may opt to purchase either the full package (if they have no health insurance) or the supplemental package (for those whose insurance plan does not cover all medical services they need).

Eligible adults must purchase their employer's minimum health care package, if it covers a pre-existing condition.

Eligible children must meet a standard of disability, be under 18 years of age, a resident of Massachusetts, and ineligible for MassHealth or SSI.

Contact: CommonHealth 1-800-841-2900.

Early Intervention Program

Provides comprehensive community-based developmental services through DPH certified programs to eligible children and their families.

Eligible children are those from birth to three years of age who have a developmental delay or are at risk of developmental delay.

Contact: Department of Public Health -- Division for Special Health Needs -- Early Intervention Services at (800) 905-8437.

Growth and Nutrition Program

This program provides comprehensive, multi-disciplinary treatment for eligible children with growth delays commonly known as Failure to Thrive. Eligible children are referred to the program by primary care and are evaluated for their growth delay and services needed.

Contact: Growth & Nutrition Programs (617) 624-5442

Clinic Sites:

Western Mass

Baystate Medical Center
Wesson Memorial Unit
Springfield (413) 794-5067

Central Mass

U. Mass. Medical Center
Growth and Nutrition Clinic
Worcester (508) 856-3951

Northeastern Mass

Greater Lawrence Family Health Center
Lawrence (978) 686-3017

Saints Memorial Medical Center
Lowell (978) 934-8458

Southeastern Mass

Brockton Hospital
C & Y Project, FTT Team
Brockton (508) 583-2900

St. Ann's Hospital
Growth and Nutrition Clinic
Fall River (508) 235-5285

Boston

Boston Medical Center (617) 534-5251

New England Medical Center
Pediatrics Unit
Boston (617) 636-0132

Children's Hospital
Growth and Nutrition Clinic
Boston (617) 355-7713

Good Start

Offered through the Mass Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, this is an intervention outreach program designed to help new families cope with parenting. Good Start provides support and information to families in their homes. Services include parent education, information and referral to community resources, assistance with home management, counseling, and parents and grandparents support groups.

Eligible individuals are expectant mothers and families with new babies (birth up to 3 years of age). Grandparents raising grandchildren under the age of 3 are also eligible for this service. There is no charge for this service

Contact: Mass Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Children

Boston Region	(617) 983-5842
Western Region	(413) 734-4978
Central Mass.	(508) 767-3029
Metro Region	(508) 872-8827
Cape Cod	(508) 790-2073
Southeast	(800) 339-2204
New Bedford, Taunton, and Attleboro	(508) 979 4552
Northeast Region	(978) 682-9222
Central Office, Boston	(617) 587-1500

Healthy Start

A program for pregnant women that provides health insurance during pregnancy, and service information (such as referral for food assistance or childbirth education).

To meet eligibility criteria one must be a resident of Massachusetts, pregnant, meet income guidelines, and have no or very limited health insurance. This program is through the Department of Public Health. Program staff will assist women in applying for MassHealth if they are eligible.

Contact: 1-800-531-2229 (This number will connect you to the closet Regional Office)
Or call:

Western Region	1-800-992-6111
Southeastern Region	1-800-642-4250
Central Region	1-800-227-7748
Greater Boston	1-800-531-2229
Northeastern Region	1-800-992-1895
Metro-West	1-888-291-0021

Contact: Medical Security Plan Service Center (Blue Cross/Blue Shield) at
1-800-914-4455.

Medicare

A federal health insurance program which provides both hospital coverage (part A), and medical coverage (part B). It is available to eligible people 65 years of age or older (whether working or retired), those with permanent kidney damage, and individuals with certain disabilities.

To be eligible individuals must meet the above criteria. Part A (hospital insurance) covers inpatient hospital charges, while part B (medical insurance) covers outpatient types of service. There is a monthly premium for Medicare, and a yearly deductible payment must be met. Medicare then covers 80% of approved charges.

Contact: Local Social Security Office, or 1-800-772-1213, TTY 1-800-325-0778
Website. www.ssa.gov

Uncompensated Care Pool

The Uncompensated Care Pool pays for medically necessary services for low-income uninsured and underinsured people provided by acute care hospitals and community health centers (CHCs) in Massachusetts. The Uncompensated Care Pool is a safety net for people who do not qualify for other programs, and requires providers to access all other sources of funding that may pay for all or part of a patient's care. All applicants must be screened for potential eligibility for other programs and providers must assist them in applying for benefits.

Request a free care application at any acute care hospital or community health center. The program is administered by the Division of Health Care Finance and Policy. For further information contact the Division of Health Care Finance and Policy at 617-988-3100.

IMMUNIZATION INFORMATION

Immunizations can be arranged through a private physician, clinic, or the DPH immunization program. These programs are open to all children in need, either free or at a minimal cost. Arrangements can also be made by calling the designated office for the town in which you reside.

OR

Contact: Head Office: Massachusetts Immunization Program, 305 South
Street, Jamaica Plain, MA 02130
617-983-6800 or 1-888-658-2850

Regional Offices:

Central Region	West Boylston	(508) 792-7880
Western Region	Amherst	(413) 545-6600
Metropolitan Boston Region	Jamaica Plain	(617) 983-6860
Northeastern Region	Tewksbury	(508) 851-7261
Southeastern Region	Lakeville	(508) 947-1231

CHILDREN’S IMMUNIZATION Schedules are subject to change. It is recommended that you check with your doctor, clinic, or the Department of Public Health for updated information.

ADULT IMMUNIZATION INFORMATION

- A. Protect yourself while protecting your grandchildren
- B. Everyone 50 years of age and older should get an influenza vaccine every year.
- C. Everyone 65 years of age and older, and younger people with chronic medical conditions, like heart or lung disease, diabetes or liver disease, should get a pneumococcal (pneumonia) vaccine.
- D. Everyone should get a Td (tetanus/diphtheria) vaccine every 10 years.
- E. Medicare Part B will cover influenza and pneumococcal vaccines for older adults.

If you have question regarding immunization for you or your grandchildren, please contact the Massachusetts Immunization Program (MIP) at (617) 983-6800 or toll free at (888) 658-2850. Information is also available at the Department of Public Health’s website at <http://www.state.ma.us/dph>.

You may also obtain information by contacting the CDC National Immunization Information Hotline at (800) 232-2522 (English) or (800) 232-0233 (Spanish). TTY users please call (800) 243-7889. The web address for the CDC National Immunization Information Hotline is <http://www.vaccines.aashstd.org>.

AIDS INFORMATION

There are many agencies throughout the state which provide services to persons with HIV and AIDS. There are a variety of types of services which may be offered, depending upon the particular agency and individual need. Below is a listing of service types.

Information and Referral: Information regarding HIV and AIDS, services available, testing, and local programs.

Support Groups: Groups can be run by professionals, or by group members. They offer supportive settings for individuals who are dealing with AIDS and HIV issues. Support groups may be for persons with AIDS, those who are HIV positive, or for their loved ones.

Case management: Some agencies have case managers who can access and coordinate a variety of services for an individual.

Home Care Services: There are a number of types of home care services. Services can include assistance with meals, shopping, housekeeping, personal care, nursing care and medical management.

Buddy Programs: Buddy Programs pair volunteers and individuals with AIDS. Buddies can offer emotional support and companionship.

Testing: An individual can be referred to a service that offers free or low cost anonymous or confidential blood testing.

Transportation: Some programs offer transportation assistance for medical appointments.

Social Groups: There are organizations that sponsor social/recreational groups for individuals with AIDS.

There are also AIDS service agencies that have programs specifically for children and families, for women, and for substance abusers. In addition, other agencies offer residential programs, such as housing and chronic care, day care programs, legal services, and counseling.

There are a great number of agencies that offer AIDS related services. We will not attempt to include all such agencies in the state in this resource guide. Rather, a few important referral numbers are listed below. By calling these numbers, an individual can be referred to the type of service they are seeking in their local area.

AIDS Information Hotline

(AIDS Action Committee)

Monday -- Friday 9 AM - 9 PM; Saturday 10 AM - 2 PM

1-800-235-2331, TTY 617-437-1672

AIDS LAW PROJECT

Legal Service Center

(617) 522-3003

AIDS Youthline

Monday -- Friday 3 PM - 9 PM

1-800-788-1234

ACT NOW Program

This program provides free and confidential medical care and services to people who are HIV positive and uninsured or underinsured. The goal of the program is to begin medical intervention early on so that people infected with HIV or AIDS can stay healthier longer. Services include anonymous testing, physical exams, preventative services, counseling, and referral.

Contact: For an ACT NOW site in your area call the AIDS Information
Hotline 1-800-235-2331

Department of Public Health AIDS Bureau (617) 624-5300

Access Team (AIDS Action Committee) (617) 450-1250

The Access Team provides information about services to clients, non clients, and providers. Services include: case management, legal advocacy, housing, medical treatment, nutritional programs and support. Primary function is information, referral, and support. This is a statewide program.

Children With AIDS Program (CAP) (617) 534-2050

CAP provides day care services to HIV infected and affected children who are under 6 years of age and an after school program for HIV infected and affected children age 6 through 14. In addition they offer summer programs. Services include comprehensive medical and therapeutic care, nutritional counseling, and individual and family counseling. (Metro-Boston Area Program)

Living Legacy

Catholic Charities (617) 287-1150

Living Legacy is a collaborative project that includes Dimock, Catholic Charities, and the AIDS Law Project. The intent of the program is to assist HIV infected parents to plan and prepare for their children's future. Services include counseling, advocating with DSS, legal assistance regarding guardianship, foster care or adoption, and estate planning. (Metro Boston Area)

Massachusetts HIV Drug Assistance Program (HDAP)

The HDAP provides financial coverage of HIV/AIDS related medications as well as side effect medications. The HDAP also includes insurance premium payments programs for eligible individuals.

Contact: 1-800-228-2714

SUBSTANCE ABUSE INFORMATION

There are different types of substance abuse services. Some are geared toward alcohol abuse, and others to addiction to a particular type of drug. Some programs are self-help, while others are

highly structured and residential in nature. Listed below is a Department of Public Health description of the various types of alcohol and drug treatment services.

Contact: 1-800-327-5050

These definitions are followed by a list of information sources where one can go to find a particular type of service in a given local area.

Alcohol and Drug Detoxification Services: Medically supervised acute treatment for safe withdrawal from alcohol and other drugs.

Long Term Residential Treatment Services: Sobriety is supported through a structured program of counseling, life skills development, and vocational services (3 - 6 months).

Narcotic Treatment: Methadone and LAAM medication and counseling services for individuals addicted to heroin and other opiates.

Outpatient Counseling: Assessment, counseling, and follow-up for individuals and families experiencing problems with alcohol and other drugs.

Driver Alcohol Education Programs for First Offender: Court mandated comprehensive assessment, interactive group sessions, introduction to self-help, referral, and continued treatment.

Fourteen Day Residential Treatment Programs for Second Offenders: A residential treatment alternative to imprisonment for court referred drunken driving second offenders (14 days).

Criminal Justice Programs: Outpatient substance abuse treatment services for prison inmates with substance abuse problems in the county corrections system.

Specialized Services: Services may include outreach, crisis intervention, AIDS education, or meet the needs of specific populations including pregnant and parenting women.

Youth Services: Primary prevention services for at-risk youth include peer leadership and referral for treatment services when needed.

Primary Prevention Centers: These programs assist schools and communities to plan, develop, and implement drug and alcohol abuse prevention, violence prevention, and tobacco prevention activities.

Self-help Groups are run by individuals who have experienced the same type of substance abuse and include such programs as Alcoholics Anonymous, and Al-Anon. (These are community services independent of DPH.)

Acupuncture/treatment for maintenance of sobriety.

Youth residential housing provides short-term residential rehabilitative service to youth 14-18 years of age.

Family shelters serve homeless recovering parents and their children, integrating outpatient substance abuse treatment into shelter program structure.

Second Offender Aftercare: Outpatient substance abuse counseling for clients convicted of a second DUI offense.

PROVIDER INFORMATION

This manual will not attempt to list all the substance abuse services within the state, but rather information sources where one can look to find a particular a type of service in a local area.

Statewide Drug and Alcohol Hotline (a 24 hour hotline run by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, Bureau of Substance Abuse Services) -- can provide general information, referral to local resources, and information on detoxification.

Contact: 1-800-375-5050

Alcoholics Anonymous (Self-help organization) These meetings are for the individual who is abusing alcohol

Contact: Area offices for information on local meetings or see your local phone book under “Community Service Numbers” for phone numbers.

Al Anon (Self-help organization for families of substance abusers).

They also run special groups for teenagers, called **Al-Ateen**. These service centers have information on meetings throughout the state.

Contact: Area offices for information on local meetings or see your local phone book under “Community Service Numbers” for phone numbers.


Please refer to the Additional Resources Section for more information.

Website: www.state.ma.us/dph



"My grandparents are cool about everything. I can talk to them about anything and they'll listen, some parents don't do that."

~When Michael Antico shared this with us he was a high school senior. He has since graduated from UMass/Amherst and is working in the western part of the state. Jim and Gloria Morgan, his grandparents, organized the Grandparents as Parents support group in Springfield with the assistance of the Springfield Council on Aging in 1994.



VII. CHILD CARE INFORMATION

The Office of Child Care Services establishes and enforces standards for child care and coordinates resources for child care and other children's services. Through the Massachusetts Child Care Resource and Referral Network (an association of community based child care resource and referral programs), individuals can be referred to child care providers in their local area, receive counseling on how to select care, and find out about the availability of child care subsidies.

Contact: Child Care Resource and Referral Network 1-800-345-0131

Western Massachusetts

Resources for Childcare	
152 North Street, Suite 230	
Pittsfield, MA 01201	(413) 443-7830

Child Care Focus	
56 Vernon Street	(413) 582-4218
Northampton, MA 01060	1-800-962-5511

Preschool Enrichment Team

293 Bridge Street, Suite 322
Springfield, MA 01103

(413) 736-3900

Central Massachusetts

Child Care Resources
76 Summer Street, Suite 345
Fitchburg, MA 01420

(508) 798-8112

1-800-660-6269

Child Care Connection
100 Grove Street
Worcester, MA 01605

(508) 757-1503

1-800-278-1503

Northeast

Child Care Circuit
190 Hampshire Street
Lawrence, MA

(978) 686-4288

Child Care Search
2352 Main Street
Concord, MA 01742

(978) 897-6400

1-800-455-8326

South Shore

Community Care for Kids
1509 Hancock Street
Quincy, MA 02169

1-800-637-2011

Southern Massachusetts

Child Care Network of Cape Cod and Islands
P.O. Box 954, 115 Enterprise Road
Hyannis, MA 02601

(508) 778-9470

1-800-845-1999

Child Care Works
4 Park Place, Room 101
New Bedford, MA 02740

(508) 999-9930

1-800-338-1717

Home Health and Child Care Services
P.O. Box 640, 15 Jonathan Drive
Brockton, MA 02403

(508) 588-6070

Boston

Child Care Choices of Boston
105 Chauncy Street
Boston, MA 02111

(617) 542-5437

Child Care Resource Center
130 Bishop Allen Drive
Cambridge, MA 02139

(617) 547-9861 ext. 72

North Shore

Child Care Circuit
190 Hampshire Street
Lawrence, MA 01840

(978) 686-4288

Child Care Circuit
196 Cabot Street
Beverly, MA 01915

(978) 922-8581

VIII. COUNSELING / MENTAL HEALTH

In many situations children and grandparents may benefit from professional help in coping with a variety of emotional and psychological issues. There are a number of different agencies which provide counseling services. Most work with individuals and/or families, and deal with a wide range of problems. Services may be covered under an individual's insurance plan (varies according to the type of insurance), or at a set fee. In addition, many agencies have sliding fee scales based upon the individual's ability to pay.

Below is a listing of the types of agencies which one might contact for assistance. Although services and agencies may differ from area to area, most can be found in larger communities.

Department of Mental Health

Catholic Charities

Clergy - Pastoral Counseling

Counseling Centers

Department of Social Services

Elder Service Agencies

Family Service Association

Jewish Family Services

Mediation Service

Mental Health Centers / Clinics

Protestant Social Service Bureau

Psychiatry Department of local hospitals

School Guidance Departments

Social Service Department of local hospitals

There is also a statewide referral source which individuals can contact for general information and referral to a local resource.

National Assoc. of Social Workers

Private Practice Referral Service

(617) 720-2828

IX. DISABILITY INFORMATION

If you feel your grandchild is experiencing difficulties related to physical, emotional, social development or academics you should seek help. If your grandchild is an infant or toddler speak to a pediatrician, other health professional or contact the Department of Public Health, Early Intervention Program. If your grandchild is in school speak to the teacher.

Often there is confusion regarding disabilities and special needs criteria regarding the services available. The following information identifies key agencies providing services. Some of these agencies have services specifically for children with special needs and some have wrap-around services as part of a child's Individual Education Plan. Eligibility criteria varies widely between these agencies therefore, it is important to check directly with each agency regarding services. For early intervention, substance abuse, HIV and AIDS service, please refer to Department of Public Health.

Massachusetts Commission for the Blind:

MCB serves individuals who are legally blind, blind and deaf-blind.

Deaf-Blind Multi-Handicapped Unit:

Provides case management, information & referral, assistive technology and vocational rehabilitation.

Social Services:

Provides consumers with vocational rehabilitation, counseling, advocacy, equipment, legal rights and benefits information.

Housing Adaptations:

MCB can fund home modifications such as ramps or lifts. It can also fund architectural drawings, assessments and construction costs.

Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing:

MCDHH services consumers who are deaf or hearing impaired.

Interpreter and Computer Aided Real Time CART Referral Services:

MCDHH coordinates a statewide directory of sign language interpreters and CART reporters. This also includes interpreter services for medical, legal or police emergency situations.

Massachusetts Assistive Technology Program:

A contracted service that researches assistive technology and provides information and referral services for consumers.

Independent Living Services for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Individuals:

This program offers peer counseling, support, advocacy plus information & referral services.

Case Management and Social Services:

This service provides case management and Ch. 688 transitional services.

Massachusetts Department of Mental Health:

Serves individuals with serious/long-term mental illness.

Designated Emergency Programs:

Emergency 24-hour crisis intervention and emergency screening for children and adolescents experiencing a mental health crisis. This service is community based. Services provided include mobile assessment, crisis stabilization, emergency respite, short-term crisis counseling, telephone triage, and one-to-one staffing.

Acute Inpatient Care:

Care includes medical, psychiatric, and psych-pharmacological evaluation and treatment. These services are provided in DMH contracted, locked units throughout the state.

Supportive Mental Health and Rehabilitation Services:

These services include day and other non-rehab programs, outpatient care, court clinic services and residential programs.

Massachusetts Department of Mental Retardation:

Serves adult individuals and families with mental retardation as well as community and family based support to children with developmental disabilities and their families.

Emergency Services:

Early intervention and crisis prevention in the home and community is provided through a 24-hr. emergency telephone and the DMR regional offices.

Community Support Services:

Services such as family supports, crisis intervention, behavioral management education, case consultation, benefits management, in-home and facility based respite and intensive in-home supports are provided to the families of individuals with mental retardation, developmental disabilities or autism.

Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission:

MRC provides vocational rehabilitation and independent living services to individuals with disabilities.

Support Living Program:

The SLP provides case management to individuals with severe physical or cognitive disabilities to de-institutionalize or prevent institutionalization.

Statewide Head Injury Program:

SHIP provides case management, community base residential support, recreation and training programs to individuals of all ages with traumatic brain injury.

Independent Living Centers:

Through the ten independent living centers (ILCs), core services such as information & referral, independent living skill training, peer counseling and advocacy are provided. Some ILCs also provide personal care assistance, housing referrals, ASL classes, and outreach.

Vocational Rehabilitation Programs:

MRC offers a range of vocational rehabilitation services such as extended supported employment, supported work for individuals with mental illness or mental retardation and supported employment.

Additional Resources...

AD-IN—Attention Deficit Information Network

(781) 455-9895

Provides support and information to families of children with ADD and adults with ADD. The organization sponsors support groups, conferences, and lists other resources available. Serves statewide.

Attention Deficit Disorder Association (Michigan)**1 (847)-432-2332**

Provides information and resources to families of children with ADD and adults with ADD. Serves nationwide.

Autism Information (North Shore ARC)**(978) 777-9135****Bureau of Transitional Planning [CH. 688—Turning 22 Law]****(617) 727-7600**

Chapter 688 provides a planning process for the most disabled 766 students who will need to transition to the adult human service agencies for services upon graduation from high school or upon turning 22, whichever comes first. Ask your local Special Education Director or call the Bureau of Transitional Planning at the Executive Office of Health and Human Services for more information about this program.

Disability Law Center (Boston Office)**(617) 723-8455 or 1 (800) 872-9992****Southeastern Mass****(508) 996-8576 or 244-9023****Western Mass****(413) 584-6337 or 1 (800) 222-5619**

This private, non-profit advocacy and law reform agency provides free legal assistance and information to disabled people throughout Massachusetts who meet income guidelines.
Serves statewide.

Division for Special Health Needs (Dept. Public Health, Boston)**1 (800) 882-1435 or (617) 624-5070**

Provides information on SSI (Supplemental Security Income) and other public benefits, as well as case management for children with special health care needs. This is a division within the state Department of Public Health. Serves statewide.

DOE (Department Of Education) (Malden) (781) 338-3000

Provides information, regulations, and publications to help explain the special education process. In addition, complaints about how school is, or is not providing special education service for individual children can be made by calling DOE and asking for the Program Quality Assurance Unit. Some useful publications available by calling DOE are “A Focus on Attention Deficits.” “A Parent’s Guide to the Special Education Regulations,” the special education regulations themselves – “Chapter 766,” and the list of Massachusetts Chapter 766 Approved Private Schools and Programs that Serve Publicly Funded Special Education Students.

**Early Intervention Programs – Dept. of Public Health (Boston) (617) 624-5070,
1-800-905-8437**

Provides information about early intervention programs available across the state. Early intervention programs provide services to children (birth to three years) who have or are at risk for handicapping conditions or developmental delays. Serves statewide.

Family Ties (Department of Public Health) Toll free 1-800-905-TIES

Boston area: (617) 727-1115

Northeast (978) 851-7261 or (617) 727-7908;

Southeast (508) 947-1231 or (617) 727-1440;

Central (508) 792-7880;

Western (413) 586-7525 or 1(800) 445-1255

Metro Boston (781)-828-7190

Provides information, referral, and support for family members of children with disabilities and chronic illness. Helps parents locate or start parent support groups. This program is located in Department of Public Health regional offices.

Federation for Children with Special Needs (Boston) (617) 236-7210 or 1 (800) 331-0688

Provides information and referral on all manner of questions pertaining to children with special needs. In some cases can make referrals to free or reduced fee special needs advocates. Also trains individuals to become special needs advocates. Serves statewide.

Home Health Care Association of Massachusetts (Boston) 1 (800) 332-3500

Provides listings of home health care agencies in communities throughout the state. Home health agencies offer health care and support services to disabled and home bound individuals of all ages. Serves statewide.

Learning Disabilities Association of Massachusetts (Waltham) (781) 891-5009

this non-profit volunteer organization provides information, referral, and written materials to help individuals with disabilities, their families, and professionals. Serves statewide.

Mass. Assoc. of Approved Chapter 766 Private Schools (Wakefield) (781) 245-1220

Provides a directory with descriptions of day and residential schools in Massachusetts serving special needs children with learning, behavioral and/or emotional difficulties. Serves statewide.

Mass. Association of Retarded Citizens (Headquarters-Waltham) (781) 891-6270

Provides information and assistance on services available to retarded citizens. In some instances can provide advocacy for special needs children who are not mentally retarded. Association of Retarded Citizens (ARC) offices are located across the state. Check your local directory or call the headquarters office listed above. Serves statewide.

Massachusetts Easter Seal Society (Headquarters – Worcester) 1 (800) 922-8290

Provides a range of services to disabled individuals of all ages. Services include information and referral, home health care, camp and swim programs, physical and occupational therapy, speech therapy, and other services. Serves statewide.

Massachusetts Office on Disabilities (Boston)**1 (800) 322-2020**

Provides information, referral, and written materials on services in Massachusetts for individuals with disabilities. Can provide direct assistance and advocacy on a limited basis. Serves statewide.

National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities

Voice and TTY 1-800-695-0285

PAC – Parent Advisory Councils**Call your local school department for the phone number**

Parent advisory councils, generally made up of parents of children with disabilities in a school district, provide a vehicle for parents to have an impact on special education in their schools. In addition, members can network, support, and share information with one another

SPAN – Special Needs Advocacy Network**(617) 928-0002**

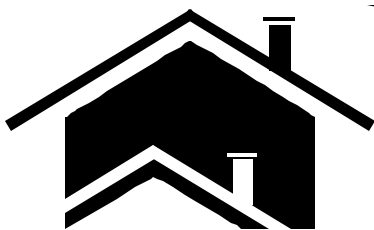
SPAN advocates and educational consultants are available to work with families, schools, and individuals. Members in private practice are contracted on a fee for service basis. Fees vary. For a list of advocates and consultants, call the number listed above.

Supplemental Security Income (Social Security Administration) 1 (800) 772-1213**TTY: 1-800-325-0778**

Children with disabilities may be eligible for financial assistance through this program which is administered by the Social Security Administration. Call the above number for a referral to the local office to determine eligibility. Serves nationwide. www.ssa.gov

“Grandparents raising their grandchildren, contrary to what most people believe, is not only an urban problem, a minority problem, or a problem restricted to the poor. This is an exploding sociological trend with far reaching implications for our future. It spans every segment of society - rich and poor, black and white, Asian and Hispanic, urban and suburban. Whenever, and wherever drug or alcohol addiction, domestic violence, or child abuse touch a family, the specter of hurt and abandoned children haunts us all. The measure of a culture is how well it treats its most vulnerable - its children.”

An excerpt from *Raising our Children's Children*
by Deborah Doucete-Dudman with Jeffrey R. La Cure
Deborah lives in Massachusetts and is raising her granddaughter.

**X. HOUSING**

Housing needs often change for grandparents who take on the responsibility of raising grandchildren. Appropriate and affordable housing can be difficult to find. The resources listed below are agencies you may wish to contact for subsidized housing information and assistance.

Housing Resources:

Local Housing Authority - Public housing and Section 8 Certificates.

Regional Housing Agencies - Housing search, and/or counseling, and Section 8 Certificates

Berkshire Housing Development Corp.
74 North Street
Pittsfield, MA 01201
Phone: (413) 499-1630
Fax: (413) 445-7633
Area served: Berkshire County

Metropolitan Boston
Housing Partnership, Inc.
569 Columbus Avenue, #1
Boston, MA 02118
Phone: (617) 859-0400; 1-800-272-0400
Fax: (617) 437-9311
Area served: Greater Boston

Community Teamwork, Inc.
167 Dutton Street
Lowell, MA 01850
Phone (978) 459-0551; 1-800-698-0551
Fax: (978) 453-9128
Area served: Northern Essex, Northern
Middlesex Counties

Rural Housing Improvement, Inc.
218 Central Street
P.O. Box 429
Winchendon, MA 01475
Phone: (978) 297-5300
Fax: (978) 297-2606
Area served: Worcester, Part Norfolk,
Part Middlesex

Franklin County Regional H.A.
80 Canal Street
Turners Falls, MA 01376
Phone: (413) 863-9781
Fax: (413) 863-9289
Area served: Franklin County

So. Middlesex Opportunity Council
300 Howard Street
Framingham, MA 01701
Phone: (508) 620-1230; (508) 235-4557
Fax: (508) 620-2310
Area served: Part Middlesex, Part Norfolk

Housing Allowance Project, Inc.
322 Main Street
Springfield, MA 01105
Phone: (413) 785-1251; 800-332-9667
Fax: (413) 731-8723
Area served: Hampden, Hampshire
Counties

South Shore Housing
Development Corp.
169 Summer Street
Kingston, MA 02364
Phone: (781) 552-4200
Fax: (781) 585-7483
Area served: Plymouth, Bristol Counties

Housing Assistance Corp.
460 West Main Street
Hyannis, MA 02601
Phone: (508) 771-5400
Fax: (508) 775-7434
Area served: Barnstable, Dukes,
Nantucket Counties

Lynn Housing Authority
174 South Common Street
Lynn, MA 01905
Phone: (781) 592-1966
Area: City of Lynn

Massachusetts Housing Finance Agency (MHFA) - Provides a directory of privately owned or managed subsidized units.
Contact: (617) 854-1000

Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) - Provides information on housing availability.
Contact: (617) 727-7765

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) - Provides information on housing availability.
Contact: (617) 994-8200

Executive Office of Elder Affairs (Elder Affairs) - Provides information.
Contact: 1-800-AGE-INFO (1-800-243-4636)

Boston Aging Concerns-Young and Old United, Inc. (BAC-YOU) - Provides information and housing resources in the Greater Boston area.
67 Newbury Street
Boston, MA 02116
Contact: (617) 266-2257

- Operates the GrandFamilies House in Dorchester, MA. (a housing community for grandparents age 50+ who are raising grandchildren)
- Operates the GrandFamilies/Raising the Next Generation Section 8 Program for grandfamilies (provides rental subsidy certificates to grandparents age 50+ who have custody of their grandchildren).
- Provides information and referral, housing counseling, housing search and placement.

HOUSING SEARCH AGENCIES

Listed below are the agencies in Massachusetts which deliver the Housing Assistance Program (HAP). This program works with families referred by the Department of Transition Assistance who are homeless or at risk of being homeless and helps them find permanent housing. HAP providers also do mediation between landlords and tenants to avoid possible eviction. To

access these services contact your local Transitional Assistance Office for a referral or call the agencies listed below.

Listing of Housing Assistance Program (HAP) Providers

Region/TAO	Contractor	Subcontractors
Boston Family Housing Dorchester New Market Square Roslindale	ABCD Housing Services 105 Chauncy St. Boston, MA 02111 (617) 357-6000 x347 Fax: (617) 542-2228	None
Region/TAO	Contractor	Subcontractors
Davis Square Malden Revere	Comm. Action Programs Inner-City, Inc. 100 Everett Ave. Chelsea, MA 02150 (617) 884-6130 fax: (617) 889-8110	Cambridge Multi Service Community Service Net. Middlesex Human Services Ag. Somerville Comm. Corp. Tri-City Comm. Action Program Tri-City Housing Task Force For Homeless Families Hildebrand Family Self-Help Ctr.
Region/TAO	Contractor	Subcontractor
North Shore	North Shore Community Action Prog., Inc. 98 Main Street Peabody, MA 01960 (978) 531-0767 fax: (978) 531-1012	Serving People in Need
Region/TAO	Contractor	Subcontractor
Haverhill Lawrence Lowell	Community Teamwork Inc. 167 Dutton Street Lowell, MA 01852	Emmaus, Inc.

(978) 459-0551
fax: (978) 453-9150

Region/TAO

Brockton
Plymouth
Quincy

Contractor

Quincy Comm. Action Progs
1509 Hancock St.
Quincy, MA 02169
(617) 479-8181
fax: (617) 479-7228

Subcontractor

Brocton Area Multi-
Serv., Inc.
South Shore Housing
Dev. Corp

Region /TAO

Falmouth
Hyannis
Oak Bluffs
Orleans

Contractor

Housing Assistance Corp.
460 West Main St.
Hyannis, MA 02601
(508) 771-5400
fax: (508) 775-7434

Subcontractor

Community Action
Comm. Of Cape
Cod and Islands, Inc.

Region/TAO

Framingham
Milford

Contractor

South Middlesex
Opportunity Council
300 Howard St.
Framingham, MA 01702
(508) 620-2630
fax: (508) 620-2612

Subcontractor

Rural Housing
Improvement

Region/TAO

Fall River
New Bedford
Taunton
Wareham

Contractor

Community Care Services
70 Main St.
Taunton, MA 02780
(508) 674-1616
fax: (508) 677-6758

Subcontractor

None

Region/TAO

Fitchburg
Southbridge
Worcester

Contractor

Central Mass. Hsg. Alliance
7-11 Bellevue St.
Worcester, MA 01609
(508) 791-7265
fax: (508) 791-0639

Subcontractor

Rural Housing
Improvement

Region/TAO

Athol
Greenfield
Holyoke
Northampton

Contractor

Hampshire Community
Action Commission
56 Vernon St.
Northampton, MA 01060
(413) 582-4200
fax: (413) 582-4202

Subcontractor

Franklin Com Action
Committee
New England
Farmworkers Council

Region/TAO

Contractor

Subcontractor

Springfield Liberty
Springfield State
Westfield

New England Farmworkers
1628-1640 Main Street
Springfield, MA 01103
(413) 272-2352
fax: (413) 846-4805

Hampshire Comm.
Action Commission

Region/TAO
North Adams
Pittsfield

Contractor
Berkshire County Regional
Housing Authority
150 North St.
Pittsfield, MA 01201
(413) 443-7138
fax: (413) 443-8137

Subcontractor
None



GrandFamilies House in Dorchester, MA

Photo by Heratch Ekmekjian, courtesy of Boston Aging Concerns-Young and Old United

XI. MASSACHUSETTS GRANDPARENT RESOURCE NETWORK SUPPORT GROUPS

The Massachusetts Grandparent Resource Network is a statewide coalition of support groups and others interested in assisting grandparents/kin who are raising grandchildren. The purpose of the network is to collaborate in advocacy efforts, share information and offer support when needed.

There are a growing number of support groups in Massachusetts; each have their own identity and autonomy. Many of these groups are coordinated and facilitated by grandparents. Some groups are supported by local agencies, while others are totally supported by its membership. Members of these groups also include others raising kin (i.e., aunts, uncles and godparents).

There are various reasons why grandparents join support groups: to develop a network of confidants who share similar concerns and situations, to gain an outlet for emotional stress, and to find information and resources. Many who join groups find the therapeutic value and information shared is well worth the effort in participating.

Listed below are local support groups and other resources. If you are interested in starting a group or need more information, you can also contact:

Massachusetts Grandparent Resource Network
Massachusetts Executive Office of Elder Affairs
One Ashburton Place, 5th Floor
Boston, MA 02108
Contact: (617) 222-7421; (617) 727-7750, 1-800-243-4636

The following information is arranged alphabetically by city/town:

Arlington

Laurie August	Phone: (781) 316-3410	Support group
Arlington Council on Aging	Fax: (781) 316-3409	Information & Referral
27 Maple St.	E-mail: laugust@town.arlington.ma.us	Phone reassurance
Arlington, MA 02476		
<i>2nd Contact</i>		
Phyllis Brown		
Arlington Youth Consultation Ctr.	Phone: (781) 316-3255	
670 R Mass. Ave.	Fax: (781) 316-3261	
Arlington, MA 02476		

Athol

Carole F. Young	Phone: (978) 249-8986	Information & Referral
Athol Council on Aging	Fax: (978) 575-0277	
584 Main Street, Ste. 15		
Athol, MA 01331		

Attleboro

Lisa Stors	Phone: (508) 223-2235	Support Group
Attleboro Council On Aging		Information & Referral

25 South Main Street
Attleboro, MA 02703

Beverly

Carol King
Beverly Children's Learning Ctr.
3 Essex Street
Beverly, MA 01915

Phone: (978) 927-1269
Fax: (978) 927-1774

Information & Referral
Grandparents "Night-out"

Boston

Edith Searcy
Women's Service Club of Boston
464 Massachusetts Avenue
Boston, MA 02118
(Grandparents as Parents)

Phone: (617) 262-3935
Fax: (617) 262-0659

Support Group
Information & Referral
Phone Reassurance
Social Activities

Jean Fox
Aid to Incarcerated Mothers
32 Rutland Street, 4th Floor
Boston, MA 02118

Phone: (617) 536-0058
Fax: (617) 536-0279

Support Group
Information & Referral
Phone Reassurance
Respite

Cheryl Harding
Roots To Wings, Inc.
110 Claybourne Street
Dorchester, MA 02124

Phone: (617) 288-2700, x215

Support Group
Children's Support Group
Information and Referral
Parenting Classes
Computer Classes
Work with Public Schools
and Families
Intergenerational Gospel Choir

Harriet Jackson-Lyons
89 Ruthuen Street
Dorchester, MA 02121
(Raising our Children's Children)

Phone: (617) 541-3561
Fax: (617) 825-9660

Support Group
Informational forums
Information & Referral
Phone Reassurance
Children's Programs
Outreach

Jamiese V. Martin
Franklin Field: Franklin Hill Healthy Boston
895 Blue Hill Avenue
Dorchester, MA 02124

Phone: (617) 880-7934
Email: healthyboss@aol.com

Informational workshops
Cultural and Recreational
Intergenerational Field Trips

Maria Medina
Jamaica Plain Head Start
315 Centre Street (Rear)
Jamaica Plain, MA 02130

Phone: (617) 522-5533
Fax: (617) 522-6838

Support Group

Bradford Haverhill and Seacoast Area

Carole Johnson
Community Action, Inc.
Head Start
P.O. 550
Newburyport, MA 01950
(Grandparents as Parents)

Phone: (978) 465-4462
Fax: (978) 462-3257

Support Group
Information & Referral
Phone Reassurance

Brockton

Joyce Allen
Ann Wright (*2nd Contact*)
10 Long Worth Avenue
Brockton, MA 02401

Phone: (508) 586-1667 or
(508) 583-6958

Support Group
Information & Referral
Phone Reassurance
Other Assistance

Cape Cod Area

Lois Carr:
Bourne Council on Aging
239 Main Street
Buzzards Bay, MA 02532
(Grandparents As Parents)

Phone: (508) 759-0653 or
(508) 759-0654
Fax: (508) 759-0655

Support Group
Information & Referral
Phone Reassurance
Grandparent Educ. Wrkshps
Lending Resource Library

Cambridge/Somerville

Susan Marshall
CASCAP, Inc.
678 Mass Avenue 10th Flr.
Cambridge, MA 02139

Phone: (617) 492-5559

Outreach

Chicopee

Sandra Lapollo
Chicopee Council on Aging
7 Valley View Court
Chicopee, MA 01020
(Grandparents as Parents Program)

Phone: (413) 534-3698

Support Groups
Information & Referral
Phone Reassurance
Kid's Program
Educ. and Recreation Prog.
Newsletter

Edgartown

Susan Desmarais
Edgartown Council on Aging
The Anchors-10 Daggett St.
Edgartown, MA 02539
(Grand parenting in a changing world)

Phone: (508) 627-4368
Fax: (508) 627-9433

Information & Referral
Outreach
Phone Reassurance
Informational forums
Respite
Stress Management

Everett

Joyce Zeiner
Devens School
22 Church Street
Everett, MA 02149
(Everett Grandparents Raising Grandchildren)
2nd Contact

Phone: (617) 394-2420

Support Group
Information & Referral
Phone Reassurance
Advocacy
Speakers

Carole Taylor
44 Jerome Road
Medford, MA 02155

Phone: (781) 488-3959

Fall River

Lorraine DuPonte
291 Ames Street
Fall River, MA 02721

Phone: (508) 672-7645

Information & Referral

Gloucester

Judy Girard
Taking Care of Business
64 Eastern Point Road
Gloucester, MA 01930
(Grandparents Offering Love and Devotion G.O.L.D.)

Phone: (978) 281-4534 or
(978) 281-3328

Support Group

Greenfield

Deborah Abrams
Mohawk Regional School
26 Ashfield Rd.
Shelburne Falls, MA 01370

Phone: (413) 625-9811

Information/Referral

Leominster

Kristi Iannacone
Multi-Service Center
53 Merriam Ave.
Leominster, MA 01453

Phone: (978) 537-7395
Fax: (978) 537-4551
Email: multictr@aol.com

Information & Referral
Parenting Classes
Children's Programs
Informational forums

Lowell

Rachelle A. Comtois
Catholic Charities
220 Pawtucket St.
Lowell, MA 01854
(Grandparents as Parents
Resource Network
of Greater Lowell)

Phone: (978) 459-3242
Fax: (978) 459-3313
Email: psmgaplowell@compuserve.com

Support Group
Information & Referral
Outreach
Phone Reassurance
Informational forums
Respite
Seminars
Recognition Days
Youth Activities

Lynn

Linda Demerjian
Family & Children Service of
Greater Lynn
111 North Common Street
Lynn, MA 01902

Phone: (781) 598-5517

Information & Referral
Support Group
Educational Session

Mansfield

Nancy Erubleton
Mansfield Council on Aging
255 Hope Street
Mansfield, MA 02048
(Grandparents Raising Grandchildren)

Phone: (508) 261-7368

Information & Referral
Support Group

Marblehead

Rita Cahil
Marblehead Counseling Center
66 Clifton Ave.
Marblehead, MA 01945

Phone: (781) 631-8273

Support Group
Information & Referral

Marshfield

Phyllis Warren
65 Seaview Avenue
Marshfield, MA 02050
(Grandparent Support Group
Marshfield United Methodist Church)

Phone: (781) 834-6425

Support Group
Information & Referral

Medford

Marie Cassidy/Coordinator
Medford Family Network
Kennedy School
215 Harvard Street
Medford, MA 02155

Phone: (781) 393-2106

Support Group
Information & Referral
Phone Reassurance
Museum Pass Program
Lending Library

Needham

Sharon Souza
Needham Council on Aging
83 Pickering Street
Needham, MA 02492-3122

Phone: (781) 455-7555

Information & Referral

New Bedford

Esperanza Alejandro
Grandparents Anonymous

Phone: (800) 882-1250

Support Group

School and Community
Support Project
New Bedford Public Schools
455 County Street, New Bedford, MA 02740

Phone: (508) 997-4511 x3201 Counseling Support

Northampton

Mary L. Plumb
129 Main Street
Northampton, MA 01060
Grandparents As Parents (GAP)

Phone: (413) 584-9392

Phone Reassurance
Informational Forums

Northborough

Family & Youth Services
63 Main Street
Northborough, MA 01532
(Good EGGs- Exceptional Grandparents Group)

Phone: (508) 393-5020

Support Group
Information & Referral
Phone Reassurance

Pittsfield

Jean Beauchemin
Ralph J. Froio Senior Center
330 North St.
Pittsfield, MA 01201
2nd Contact

Phone: (413) 499-9346

Support Group

Fax: (413) 442-8531

Information & Referral

E-mail: councilonaging@taconic.net

Children's program

Susan Dawdy
McInerney Parent Ctr.
48 Elizabeth St.
Pittsfield, MA

Phone: (413) 499-3556

Fax: (413) 445-4133

Email: sdmpe@berkshir.net

Plymouth

Eileen Krebs
Plymouth Council On Aging
130 Court Street
Plymouth, MA 02360
(Raising Grandchildren Support Group)

Phone: (508) 830-4230

Support Group
Information & Referral
Phone Reassurance
Outreach

Quincy

3 Contacts for support group

Una Armstrong
c/o Harvard Vanguard
Mental Health Dept.
1250 Hancock Street
Quincy, MA 02169

Phone: (617) 774-0876

Support Group
Information & Referral

Mary Burke
Quincy Department of Elder Services
83 Saratoga Street
Quincy, MA 02171

Phone: (617) 376-1243

Fax: (617) 376-1248

or

Bethany Hyland
Weymouth Dept. of Elder Services
182 Green Street
No. Weymouth, MA 02191

Phone: (781) 337-9702

Fax: (781) 331-8728

Reading

Marie M. Ammer
Reading Elder Service
16 Lowell St.
Reading, MA 01867

Phone: (781) 942-9059

Fax: (781) 942-9071

E-mail: mammer@ci.reading.ma.us

Support Group
Information & Referral
Phone Reassurance

Salem

Patricia Kenney, PhD
Salem Hospital Professional Services Bldg.
172 Lafayette Street
Salem, MA 01970
(Grandparents Raising Grandchildren)

Phone: (978) 744-4033

Support Group
Information & Referral
Phone Reassurance

Salisbury

Gretchen E. Grasso
28 Gerrish Road
P.O. Box 5249
Salisbury, MA 01952
(Amesbury Grandparent Network)

Phone: (978) 465-3353

Support Group
Information & Referral
Phone Reassurance

Sherborn

Deborah Dudman
P.O. Box 346
Sherborn, MA 01770

Phone: (508) 653-2984

Information & Referral
Phone Reassurance

Somerville

Aida Corredor
The Parent Information Center
1060 Broadway
Somerville, MA 02144
(Grandparent Support Group)

Phone: (617) 625-6600
Fax: (617) 628-3351

Support Group
Information & Referral
Phone Reassurance
Outreach
Children's Programs
Informational forums
Parenting Classes

2nd Contact

Zoya S. Sliva, Ed.D
1 Walker St. Place
Cambridge, MA 02138

Phone: (617) 354-5837

Springfield

Wilberto "Tito" Santana
Multicultural Community Services
100 Wilbraham Rd.
Springfield, MA 01103

Phone: (413) 782-2500
Fax: (413) 796-1955

Support Group
Information & Referral
Outreach
Phone Reassurance
Informational forums
Support for Children
with Developmental
Disabilities

West Wareham

Marcine Fernandes
Project WRAP (Working Relationship as Parent)
Wareham Public Schools
1073 Main Street
West Wareham, MA 02576

Phone: (508) 291-3539

Behavioral Intervention
Support Group

West Springfield

Regina Zaskey
Parent Resource Office
160 Park Street
West Springfield, MA 01089
(Grandparents as Parents Support Group)

Phone: (413) 263-3362

Support Group
Resource Kit
Parenting Classes

Weymouth (and Quincy Area)

Elizabeth Hartigan
Elementary School Foster and Kinship Care Project
Walker Home and School
1068 Central Avenue
Needham, MA 02492

Phone: (617) 549-5639

Information and Referral
Work with Public Schools
and Families
Telephone Reassurance
Support Services

Wrentham

Phone: (508) 384-5425

Support Group

Anna Deschamps
Wrentham Council on Aging
400 Taunton Street
Wrentham, MA 02093


Informational and Referral
Informational forums
Outreach

Worcester

Mary Taylor
Worcester EOE/ MSPCC
128 Providence St.
Worcester, MA 01609
(Grandparents Raising Their grandchildren)

Phone: (508) 799-8072
Fax: (508) 799-1743

Support Group
Childcare
Information and Referral
Phone Reassurance
Informational forums
Parenting Classes
Children's Programs
Outreach



"The most special thing my grandma and grandpa do for me
is put a roof over my head, give me food to eat.
I enjoy going on vacations with them and
the most important thing is we all love each other."
~Jeremy, age 9~
~ A grandchild living with his grandparents in Massachusetts ~

Grandparent Caregiving Resources

The following are some of the national organizations and agencies providing Information and assistance to grandparents.

AARP Grandparent Information Center

AARP Grandparent Information Center is a national clearinghouse for information about programs, support groups, research activities, and resources for grandparent-headed families. A number of publications, a quarterly newsletter, and referrals to national and local resources are available from the Center.

601 E Street, NW
Washington, DC 20049
Phone: (202) 434-2296
Fax: (202) 434-6474
Website: <http://www.aarp.org>

Generations United (GU)

Generations United is a national coalition dedicated to intergenerational policies, programs and issues. GU can provide general information on grandparent caregiving.

440 First Street NW
Suite 310
Washington, DC 20001
Phone (202) 662-4283
Website: <http://www.gu.org>

Grandparents as Parents (GAP)

Contact person: Sylvie de Toledo
P.O. Box 964
Lakewood, CA 90714
Phone: (310) 924-3996
Fax: (714) 828-1375

GrandsPlace

An internet web site devoted to grandparents raising grandchildren.. This site provides useful links to a wide array of resources

<http://grandsplace.com>

National Coalition of Grandparents

137 Larkin St.
Madison, WI 53705
Phone: (608) 238-8751
Fax: (608) 238-8751
This coalition is working for legislation and other policy changes in support of relative caregivers.

R.O.C.K.I.N.G Inc..(Raising Our Children's Kids: An Intergenerational Network of Grandparenting Inc.)

National organization that helps relative caregivers access support groups and other resources in their area.
P.O. Box 96
Niles, MI 49120
Phone: (616) 683-9038



XII. ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The list below is additional resource numbers that provide information and referral about a variety of subjects. The telephone book yellow pages, white business pages, and government listing blue pages are also good sources for this type of information.

Abuse/Risk/Stress Information

Child At Risk Hotline (Dept. of Social Services) 24 hour hotline
(Reporting of child abuse/risk after 5 PM, weekends and holidays)
1-800-792-5200 will refer to local office during regular business hour.
Call the local DSS office during regular business hours and, ask for the Protective Screening Unit.

Child Witness to Violence Project (617) 414-4247

Childhelp USA (National) 1-800-4A-CHILD or 1-800-422-4453
Child Abuse Hotline (TDD) 1-800-2A-CHILD or
1-800-422-4453

Disabled Persons Protection Commission Abuse Hotline
(To report abuse/neglect of disabled individuals between
the ages of 18 and 59) 1-800-426-9009

Domestic Violence National Hotline 1-800-799-SAFE

Elder Abuse and Neglect Hotline (24 hours)
1-800-922-2275

Parents Helping Parents
(Network of support groups for individuals with concerns
around parenting). 1-800 882-1250

Parental Stress Line (Parents and Children's Services)
(24 hour support line for parents, grandparents, and other
caregivers who are under stress) 1-800-632-8188

Rape Crisis Center 1-800-922-8772

Samaritans Suicide Prevention Crisis Line (617) 247-0220

Toughlove
(Self-help group for parents and grandparents of difficult teenagers)
1-800-333-1069

Alcohol/Drug/Addiction Information

Al-Anon (groups for family members of alcoholics)	Business White Pages
Al-Ateen (groups for teenage family members of alcoholics)	Business White Pages
Alcoholics Anonymous	Business White Pages
Mass Council on Compulsive Gambling	1-800-426-1234; 617-426-1855 (TTY)
National Helpline (drug treatment) (Referral to programs and support groups)	1-800DRUGHEL or 1-800-378-4435
National Institute on Drug Abuse Abuse Hotline	1-800-662-HELP
Smokers Quitline	1-800-TRY-TO-STOP (English) 1-800-8-DEJALO (Spanish) 1-800-TDD1477 (TDD)
Statewide Drug and Alcohol Hotline (Department of Public Health)	1-800-327-5050
(Please find additional numbers in the Substance Abuse section.)	
Counseling – Child, Family, and Caregiver mediation	

Disease Information

AIDS Hotline (AIDS Action Committee) Provides a wide range of information on AIDS, HIV, and services for individuals	1-800-235-2331; 617-536-7733 TTY 617-437-1672
AIDS Youthline (AIDS Action Committee) Provides same information as AIDS Hotline - phones are staffed by teens	1-800-788-1234 617-536-7733 TTY 617-437-1672
ASK-A-NURSE (not accessible from all calling areas)	1-800-544-2424
Hepatitis C Hotline	1-888-443-4372
Mass Cancer Information Center (National Cancer Institute)	1-800-422-6237

Massachusetts Immunization Program	(617) 983-6800
Massachusetts League of Community Health Centers	1-800-475-8455
National AIDS Hotline (American Society of Health Associations through Center for Disease Control) Nationwide information and referral on HIV and AIDS. (In Spanish) TDD	1-800-342-2437 1-800-344-7432 1-800-243-7889
Physician Referral Service Sexually Transmitted Disease (STD) Control Program	1-800-322-2303 (617) 983-6940

Education Information

<i>AD-IN – Attention Deficit Information (Needham)</i> Provides support and information to families of children with ADD and adults with ADD. The organization sponsors support groups, conferences, and lists other resources available. Serves statewide.	(781) 455-9895
Even Start and Family Literacy Challenge (and Adult Literacy)	1-800-447-8844 (voice/TTY)
Higher Information Center (Boston Public Library) Information on loans, scholarships, and general post-secondary information.	1-800-442-1171
Massachusetts Advocacy Center (advocacy for children needing special ed services)	(617) 357-8431
National Center for Death Education	(617) 928-4649
Special Education Appeals Bureau (Department of Education) mediates disputes and conducts hearings about special education services to children in public schools.	(781) 338-6400
Scholarship Office (Commonwealth of MA)	(617) 727-9420

information on state scholarships.

Financial/Service Information

Child Supplemental Security Income (SSI)/ Public Benefits Information Line (Department of Public Health)	1-800-882-1435
Child Support Payment Enforcement (Department of Revenue, Customer Services)	1-800-332-2733
Department of Social Services Payment Assistance Line	1-800-632-8218
Food Source Hotline Food Line (Project Bread) (food stamp benefits eligibility information and other food resources)	1-800-632-8218
Social Security and Supplemental Security Income	1-800-772-1213 TTY 800-325-0778 www.ssa.gov
Fuel Assistance Programs (Fuel assistance and energy conservation programs)	1-800-632-8175
WIC (Women, Infants and Children Nutrition Program) through the Department of Public Health eligible infants and children under the age of five, and pregnant and postpartum women	1-800-WIC-1007
CMSP is a health insurance program for children under the age of 19 in Mass- achusetts who do not have health insurance.	1-800-909-2677

General Information and Referral

Citizen Information Service	1-800-392-6090
-----------------------------	----------------

Information on state regulations and resources

Mass Network of Information Providers (Information Center for Individuals with Disabilities)	1-800-642-0249
Mass Office on Disability (TDD)	1-800-322-2020 1-800-322-2020
United Way Information and Referral Services (First Call for Help)	1-800-231-4377

Specific Services: Information and Referral

Adoption Crossroads (statewide post-adoption support services)	1-800-972-2734
Child Care Resource and Referral Program Office of Child Care Services (information on day care programs throughout the state)	1-800-345-0131 or (617) 727-8900
Childhood Injury Prevention Program Child Safety Seats For a list of technicians call or go to:	1-800-443-SAFE or 617-534-5197 www.massghsb.com
Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program	1-800-532-9571
Department of Employment and Training ("Unemployment Office") (Customer Service)	(617) 626-5400
Department of Social Services Ombudsman Office	(617) 748-2000
Domestic Violence Information and Referral (Casa Myrna Vazquez Inc.)	1-800-992-2600
Executive Office of Elder Affairs Information and Referral	1-800-243-4636 TTY 1-800-872-0166
Expanded Food & Nutrition Education Program	1-800-622-3637
Family TIES at Department of Public Health (support for families of children with special needs)	1-800-905-8437
FIRSTSteps	(617) 624-6060

(referrals for parent education & support)

Good Grief Program, Boston Medical Center (617) 414-4005

Injury Prevention program, child safety seats (DPH) 1-800-CAR-SAFE

Kid's Net (617) 587-1500
Support services to foster, kinship and adoptive children and families.

Mass Coalition for the Homeless (617) 737-3430

Mass Dental Society 1-800-342-8747
(Dentist Referral)

Mass Adult Literacy Hotline 1-800-447-8844
(parent education, home visits)

Massachusetts Families For Kids (617) 445-6655
Mass Families for Kids provides services to
adoptive families including: permanency mediation
and information and referral.

MassHealth Customer Service 1-800-841-2900

Mass Medical Society/N.E. Journal of Medicine 1-800-322-2303
(Physician Referral)

Mass Passenger Safety Program 1-800-CAR-SAFE

Pension Assistance Project (617) 287-7311

The Ride (MBTA) (781) 899-7433

SHARE Foundation: Society for Human Advance- (508) 999-8482
ment through Rehabilitation(evaluation, equipment
and services for people with physical disabilities)

SSI for Children with 1-800-882-1435
Special Healthcare Needs (DPH)

Statewide Head Injury Program (MRC) 617-204-3852

Health and Prescription Insurance Information

Health Insurance Counseling

SHINE Program (Serving Health Information Needs of Elders) is a volunteer network of locally based counselors providing information, counseling and assistance to elders regarding Medicare supplements, Medicaid, HMOs, prescription drug options, free care and other health insurance benefits. 1-800-243-4636 or TTY 800-872-0166

Medicare Enrollment/SSA	1-800-772-1213
Medicare Information Part B	1-800-882-1228
Medicare Information Part A	1-888-896-4997

MassHealth application information 1-800-841-2900, (TTY 1-800-596-1272)

Medigap insurance information or contact your specific company. 1-800-AGE-INFO

Medicare Advocacy Project 1-800-323-3205
Greater Boston Legal Services assists Medicare beneficiaries in obtaining coverage.

Uncompensated Care Pool 617-988-3100
Apply at local hospital or at community health center for further information call the Division of Health Care Finance and Policy.

Mass MedLine (free prescription drug assistance) 1-866-633-1617
(Mass Relay 711)

Prescription Advantage is a prescription drug insurance plan for those over sixty-five and qualified younger low-income people with disabilities administered by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.
1-800-AGE-INFO (1-800-243 4636)
TTY: 1-877-610-0241
www.800ageinfo.com

Runaway Information

Child Find of America National hotline will assist in search for runaways and children who have been taken by non-custodial parent. -800-IAM-LOST or 1-800-426-5678

Missing Children Help Center (National Child Safety Council) assistance in finding missing children, information and referral regarding custody and visitation rights.
1-800-872-5437

National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (Clearinghouse which provides information on missing and exploited children). 1-800-843-5678

Me and Grand ma Singing some Church
Songs



Chantee, age 12

“My favorite thing to do with my grandmother”

XIII. HELPFUL HINTS



This guide suggests many places to seek assistance and counsel. Grandparents, particularly those with years of experience in raising grandchildren, have much to offer. The following is a sampling of their practical advice.

- ◇ Become organized – get two calendars. A BIG one for the kitchen to write everything down on and a pocket one for abbreviated information for your pocketbook. The trick is keeping them up-to-date. Compile a folder of important information such as social security number, medical, insurance and school records for your grandchild. I have started one for myself as well.
- ◇ It is hard but I find a little time just for myself whenever I can...having a cup of tea and a few quiet minutes reading something to enjoy, an extra five minutes in the tub, an extra long conversation with a friend, or the luxury of going to the hairdresser.
- ◇ My advice to all grandparents is to first join a support group or start one. Joining a grandparent group has opened up new and needed relationships for me. We discuss parenting as well as offer support to each other on personal matters. I look forward to our meetings.
- ◇ Don't sweat the small stuff. Grin, bite your tongue and take a breath. If it's not dangerous, not anti-social and not destructive, rethink your plan to interfere.

- ◇ Taking a parenting refresher seminar is worthwhile. I never thought I would seek guidance in raising my pre-teen granddaughter. I keep saying to myself, “this is just a phase she is going through.” However, I was worried knowing the teen years were approaching fast and my granddaughter and myself were having communication problems. The seminar was great--it validated things I was doing right and gave me insight on adolescence development that I never knew.
- ◇ CHOOSE YOUR BATTLES. Avoid power struggles over food and clothing and save your energy for more difficult and important issues like setting limits, school work and curfews.
- ◇ Reading with my grandchildren has become a daily routine. The TV is off at a certain time and we all settle down. I quietly read to my two grandchildren who have difficulty in reading. They enjoy listening and talking about the stories. Our trips to the library for new books are also fun.
- ◇ Make as few rules as possible, then stick to them. Kids get confused when rules change. CONSISTENCY, CONSISTENCY, CONSISTENCY. It’s hard, but it pays off.
- ◇ Kids need discipline that is fair and consistent. I’m convinced, no matter what age, kids are looking for rules and standards to guide them. I try very hard to talk things out with my grandson so we are perfectly clear on what is expected and what is the consequence if he makes a bad choice.
- ◇ Take advantage of community resources. The library offers a variety of programs which my grandchildren have enjoyed. I have also used their passes to the Museum of Science and the Boston Aquarium.
- ◇ Say “YES” instead of “NO”. When my two and four year old grandsons want lollipops just before lunch, I say “Yes, you can have one right after lunch”, instead of saying “NO”. This avoids a power struggle and sometimes a temper tantrum. This strategy can be used for picking up toys before going to the playground. It really works!
- ◇ I use a simple exercise when I get nervous or upset. I just STOP and take three deep breaths. This pause helps me to respond more calmly in situations.
- ◇ It took me a while to get my act together when I first took in my grandchildren. I was overwhelmed with the reality that it was just me and the grandchildren. I started to question myself; “can I do this?” My faith in God gave me the strength and determination to move forward with more self-reliance.

- ◇ Try hard to bring humor into your home. Laughing and doing silly things has helped me and my grandchildren through some difficult times.
- ◇ Don't be afraid to look for help and be prepared. Use your phone. Be ready with the questions you wish to ask, keep a piece of paper handy or note book, and write down information, such as: what specific information you need to provide, whom you are speaking with, and, if an appointment is made, be sure to write down the date, time, place and the person's name with whom you will meet. If you make any appointments make sure you are there on time. Be prepared with the necessary information and a list of questions.
- ◇ I had to go to court regarding the guardianship of my grandchildren. I found that the journal I kept, (recording the relationship between my grandchildren and their parents) useful. Over time, the countless non-show visits, empty promise, chaotic visits and the children's reactions to all of this, produced legitimate documentation that was viewed by the court.
- ◇ It took me a while before I finally realized I needed to choose between my son or his two children whom I am raising. It was a hard decision but my grandchildren come first over the irresponsibility and dependence of my son. My grandchildren's lives have become stable and I am not in a constant state of stress. Ground rules for my son have been set which include no more financial support and certain conditions regarding his visits.
- ◇ Take it one day at a time, try not looking at it like you have to raise the children for the next 10, 15, 18 years. Try getting through the day and deal with what tomorrow will bring when tomorrow arrives.
- ◇ **BE GOOD TO YOURSELF:** Take time, maybe once a week or once a month to treat yourself. It can be going shopping for that special something or pampering yourself to a manicure, pedicure, or new hairstyle. Give Yourself a Treat.
- ◇ Enjoy your grandchildren while they are with you-even though it can be difficult at times. It goes by so quickly and then they are gone.



"As a grandmother raising two grandchildren, I feel a responsibility to help build my grand-children's self-esteem by demonstrating love in my action and words towards them, allowing them the freedom to love their parents, and not feel responsible for their behavior.

Children being raised by persons other than their biological parents often feel that there is something wrong with them. We need to let children know that they are loved and wanted for just who they are, also to help them deal with the feeling that they have no self worth because their parents couldn't care for them. Those feelings can create great pain in a child and increase the fear that no one else could love them. We must recognize children's intelligence, reinforce our love and commitment, trust in their abilities and capabilities as they grow and develop. The community that surrounds a child with care and concern for their well-being will reinforce the strength that children needs to feel good about themselves and others. I think it becomes very important for adults to help children understand that when a parent can no longer care for them, it has nothing to do with them as a person, but was done out of love for them."

-Cheryl R. Harding, Executive Director, From Roots to Wings, Inc.

From Roots to Wings is a community organization that provides support, education, social/recreation, resources and referral information to grandparent-headed families in Dorchester, MA.



Stress is a major health factor in the lives of grandparents.

The following are a few suggestions for grandparents which can be applied to grandchildren.



Reducing Stress

- Be clear about your values, and teach them to your grandchildren try to organize life around these values.
- Simplify as much as possible.
- Separate out what children want from what they need.
- Maintain a healthy lifestyle: food, exercise, fresh air, and interests.
- Participate in positive groups or organizations.
- Stay connected-with family, friends, neighborhood, etc.
- Maintain balance: between activity and rest, noise and quiet.
- Use healthy coping skills: stress management, common sense.
- Know when to reach out for help, and find the best resources.
- Keep a part of every day for yourself: reflect, balance, centering.
- Use your own good judgment, and turn to outside sources that you know will be helpful: programs, friends, books, etc.

~Jeanne Martin, Formerly of Massachusetts Prevention Center, Cambridge



**When you are in a stressful situation,
remember these steps.**

Stand Back and stop your reaction.

Breathe three deep breaths.

Reflect on what is happening.

Select a course of action.

- Developed for a pilot program in stress management, MA Executive Office of Elder Affairs



Ideas for Grandparents: How Well do You Know Your Grandchild?

Living with a grandchild means nurturing, scolding, talking, and listening. It means doing things together and doing things apart. No matter how much time we spend with another person, there is usually much we don't notice or don't know about that person. Answer the questions on this quiz to find out for yourself how well you know your grandchild. After you fill in the answers, schedule a time to sit down with your grandchild to check how well you did on the quiz. Not only will this quiz give you an opportunity to grade yourself, but also may serve as a tool to learn more about your grandchild. Perhaps when you are finished, your grandchild will want to quiz you on some of these questions.

1. What really makes your grandchild angry?
2. Who is your grandchild's best friend?
3. What color would he/she like his/her room to be?
4. Who is your grandchild's hero?
5. What embarrasses him/her most?
6. Would your grandchild prefer a vanilla milk shake, a hot fudge sundae or strawberry shortcake?
7. What is his/her biggest fear?
8. In gym class, would your grandchild rather play basketball, do exercises, or run relays?
9. What is his/her favorite subject in school?
10. What is the subject he likes/dislikes most?
11. Who is your grandchild's favorite teacher?
12. What names is your grandchild called in school?
13. What is his/her favorite music?
14. What is your grandchild's biggest complaint in the family?
15. If you could buy your grandchild anything in the world, what would be his/her first choice?
16. What is his/her favorite television show?
17. Of what accomplishment is your grandchild proudest?
18. What has been the biggest disappointment in your grandchild's life?
19. What is his/her favorite sport?
20. Which of these chores does your grandchild dislike doing most: drying dishes, cleaning his/her room, or taking out the trash?
21. What is your grandchild's favorite book?
22. Does your grandchild feel too small or too big for his/her age?
23. What gift from you does your grandchild cherish most?
24. What person outside of your family has most influenced your grandchild's life?
25. When does your grandchild prefer to do homework: right after school, after supper before bed, or in the morning before school?

-Adapted From "Parent Info Pack" Parents Anonymous of New Jersey-

WE NEED YOUR HELP AND SUGGESTIONS:

This resource manual will be updated periodically. It is important we have current and correct information. If you are aware of an error(s), omission(s), or would like to see additional information mentioned, please notify:

Sheila Donahue King
Massachusetts Executive Office of Elder Affairs
One Ashburton Place (5th Floor)
Boston, MA 02108
Phone: (617) 222-7421, (617) 727-7750, TTY: 1-800-872-0166
Fax: (617) 727-9368
Email: Sheila.Donahue-King@State.MA.US

Or

Karen R. O'Leary
Executive Office of Health and Human Services
One Ashburton Place 11th Floor
Boston, MA 02108
Phone: (617) 727-7600 ext. 310, TTY: 617-727-0014
Fax: (617) 727-1396
Email: Karen.Oleary@State.MA.US

Notes